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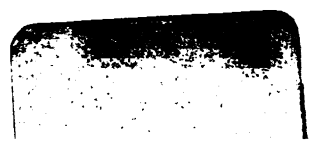

THE MIRZA.

VOL. III.

THE MIRZA.

BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE MIRZA.

HISTORY OF MOBAREK SHAH AND THE MAGICIAN, CONTINUED.

The King Kamram then ordered that his sister the Princess Khoshboo, should be apprized of the presence of Mobarek, and when matters were prepared in the harem, he was allowed to enter, precautions being taken for preserving the necessary decorum—Khoshboo was placed on one side of the door, whilst Mobarek stood on the other, King Kamram and the old priest the meanwhile taking post at a convenient distance. When Mobarek was apprized of the presence of his wife, he exclaimed,

"Khoshboo, my eyes—I am Mobarek your husband—do you acknowledge me?"

"Yes, yes," said Khoshboo, "can you doubt it? whatever happens, your faithful wife will never more separate from you—though you are changed in person, still you are the same in mind and heart—I will be yours till death."

"Be not rash, light of my life," said Mobarek, "Listen to my words, before you take a final resolution. Your brother, the King Kamram rejects my pretensions, and calls me impostor. He desires me to leave his city. I am, as you know, hideous to behold—I have no dwelling place—no home—I am rejected by all—an outcast—poor, and without hope of riches. My first dependance is on Providence, and next in the hope that I may acquire sufficient knowledge in the arts of magic, to destroy the spell under which I am bound, and thus regain possession of my throne. I foresee great hardships—want—fatigue—long and arduous journies. Dearest Khoshboo, reflect upon this before you make your decision—pause ere you call me husband; whichever way you may decide, this I swear, that your Mobarek will ever live in the hope of one day calling you his own again; but he cannot invite

you to partake of his miseries; all he requires is, that you do not abandon the hope of again becoming the partner of his kingdom."

"Hear me, Mobarek," exclaimed Khoshboo, with energy and determination, "you know me little if you look upon me merely as a fair weather wife. I am yours in weal or in woe; my conviction that you are my own husband, though in disguise, is fixed; that conviction is inspired by Allah, and nothing shall deter me from following you throughout the world, discarded though you be by my brother, or seeking your fortune in fatigue and in travel. One thing only I entreat of you to grant, which you must allow out of consideration to the weakness of my sex. Exhibit your present face to me as little as you possibly can; let me rest in the illusion that I am living with the Mobarek whom I first knew, who has ever been the pride of my life, the only man I have ever loved, the only one I ever will love, whom I will always obey, and will ever cherish."

This conversation ceasing, Mobarek turned towards Kamram, and said:

"Yes, yes," said Khoshboo, "can you doubt it? whatever happens, your faithful wife will never more separate from you—though you are changed in person, still you are the same in mind and heart—I will be yours till death."

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This conversation ceasing, Mobarek turned towards Kamram, and said:

"You have now heard the determination of your sister, and are acquainted with her feelings. You cannot be cruel enough to separate us—let us depart hence—should fortune favour me you will hear from me again, and then, perhaps, you will regret the part you have taken in this matter."

Kamram once more turned to the old man and said:

"Have you heard? can it or can it not be?"

"Let them go, in the name of Allah and the prophet," said the sage; "when a woman is run away with by illusion, she is like a bramble carried across the plain in a whirlwind, nothing can stop her;—let them go, Allah go with them."

The King Kamram, without more words, allowed his sister to follow the bent of her inclination—for he was embarrassed by her presence, and glad to be rid of her importunities. He insisted only upon one stipulation, which was, that they should quit his city and territory in all secrecy, lest the King of Cash-

gar should complain that he had acceded to the wishes of one denounced as an impostor.

Khoshboo was ordered to travel, divested of all external show, and adapt herself in everything to the position in which the man she called her husband was placed. The constant wife acceded to this without a murmur; her courage was excited, she was impelled by enthusiasm, combined of love and disdain, and proudly bidding her brother a scornful farewell, she thereby made him understand how utterly she despised the unmanliness of his conduct. She would accept of no benefit from his hands, and appointing a rendez-vous at the city gate with her husband, at the early dawn of the ensuing day, she left the place of her birth without any attendant but him who she felt was her appointed protector by the decrees of destiny.

Here was to be seen a Princess, unrivalled throughout Asia for beauty and accomplishments, humbly mounted on an ass, followed by her husband, a King on foot, with

no protection save the sword by his side and the staff in his hand, both thrown upon the surface of the globe, to seek their fortunes as the speed of Heaven might direct.

Khoshboo was veiled from head to foot as a woman ought to be, whilst Mobarek, who felt how much his wife's happiness depended upon his keeping his own face covered, managed, by ingeniously accommodating the folds of a turban to the obnoxious features, much in the same manner as the Arabs of the desert protect themselves from the ardour of the sun, he screened himself effectually.

They travelled onwards for some time in silence. Mobarek's gratitude for the sacrifice which his beloved wife was making in his behalf, knew no bounds whilst she revolved in her mind how she might best relieve her husband from such like feelings of obligation. When they had travelled so far that the city was no longer in sight, they stopped, and whilst Khoshboo alighted from her ass, Mobarek tended it to a spot where it might graze in safety. Then carefully covering his face, they sat down

side by side under a tree, and thus conversed.

"Khoshboo, light of my eyes, and beloved of my heart," said Mobarek, "what words have ever been invented, or what ingenuity can ever draw up from the depths of my feelings language sufficiently eloquent to express my love and gratitude? Let me kiss the print of your footsteps, let the dust of your slippers be ointment for my eyes, let me do anything however servile, to shew you how truly I esteem your kindness. But, my love, no one was ever kind in vain; you will reap golden harvests for this, even in this world, for I feel a something within my breast which tells me, that no King and Queen have ever undergone vicissitudes such as ours, without some speedy and violent reaction. However, laying aside such like expectation for the present, we must form some plan for the future. Tell me, oh my fair one, whither shall we first bend our steps?"

Khoshboo heard these words with mixed feelings of joy and grief, her ears enjoying the sound of her husband's voice, and hearing the expression of his sentiments

with delight; whilst her eyes were averted from him, lest she could catch a view of those features which would dissipate the illusion and make her sicken with loathing. She said, "Let not the conduct of your faithful Khoshboo be too highly valued. She pursues only that which is her duty. Once convinced that you are her true and lawful husband, what else can she do? Let our energies now be turned to the one object of liberating you from the thraldom of your present state. We must seek the country of the magi, acquire their science and then return and punish the usurper of our throne, by wresting your own lawful face from his vile carcase, and restoring to him his most unblest features. We must turn our steps towards the west, and may Allah and his holy prophet protect us."

"Yes," said Mobarek, "after having been driven from Cashgar, such was my original intention; it was my intention to make a vow, permitting the hair of my head to grow its full length, vowing that no razor should approach it until I was reseated on my throne, and thus

perform a pilgrimage to the tomb of the prophet Nouh el Nebi. But now, light of my eyes, that scheme is at end—I devote myself to you—we will go seek, wherever it may be found, a counter-spell to the horrible one which affects me, and may Allah in his mercy direct our footsteps."

Having conversed for some time, and by mutual expressions of confidence in the decrees of providence, soothed their minds into resignation, they proceeded again on their journey. But ignorant of the road and of the relative position of places, they pursued a track, which instead of leading them on to the high road of Samarcand, conducted them into a valley where they became entangled in the intricacies of the mountain scenery.

They had brought sufficient food to last them for the first days' sustenance, and consequently were so far independant, and being unwilling to hold communication with King Kamram's subjects, they avoided villages and determined to pass the night in some mountain cavern.

With this view, striking into a deep dell,

Mobarek followed a path which led through a delicious succession of woodlands, and which gradually ascending, brought him to a spot so secluded from the gaze of man, that he determined there to take up his quarters. He caused Khoshboo to dismount from her beast, and placing her in safety under a rock, which formed sufficient protection from the weather, he there spread his cloak, and gathering leaves and brushwood, made her a bed, whilst the packsaddle of the ass, became a substitute for a pillow. Then spreading the meal before her, he invited her to recruit her energies with food, whilst he proceeded to a distance to perform the same operation, lest she might behold his so much dreaded face.

Scarcely had they finished their meal, when, to their surprize and apprehension, they heard the sound of horses' footsteps ascending the mountain in the same direction which they had come, accompanied by men's voices. Mobarek immediately drove the ass from the spot where he was openly grazing, to a dense part of of the wood, and placed himself in such a posi-

tion with Khoshboo, that they might see the intruders without being themselves seen.

As the strangers approached, it was discerned that they consisted of two horsemen fully equipped, and armed from head to foot; fierce and rude looking men, and strange to say, wearing a dress, parts of which assimilated to that worn by Mobarek. Their horses appeared overcome by fatigue, and they were themselves dusty and way-stricken.

Having reached the spot immediately facing Mobarek and Khoshboo they drew up, stopped and looked back, as if awaiting morè companions. And in so doing, they continued their conversation as follows:

"It is in truth wonderful," said the youngest to the older horseman, "that so long a time should have elapsed since we heard from him. Is he dead think you, or do you think he has intentionally played us false."

"What do I know," said the elder man, who was called Cheikh Omar, "what do I know, Norouz? Our Chacal Bey is not an every day man; with that secret devilry of his he performs strange things. Perhaps, he has

changed himself into another, and could not change back again; we must put our trust in Allah and have patience."

"That is very likely," said Norouz; "to say the truth, when we were at Cashgar the other day, I could not help indulging in strange suspicions. Every one was speaking out boldly upon the alteration which had taken place in the King, and that he was not the same man he was known to be before; but as Allah is great, such a thing could never be."

"What words are you throwing into the air, youngster!" said Cheikh Omar. "Chacal become King of Cashgar—that would be fine, indeed, that would be like making a horse of an ass with a vengeance; besides, I know enough of the devil's magic to know, that Kings cannot be touched; they are too well guarded by talismans.—No, no, he is working out some money scheme, and before long we shall see his ugly face come back with loads of treasure at his back. Gold is the god he adores—he does not care for kingdoms; what could such a swine as he do with a kingdom?"

"We shall see," said Norouz; "time will tell us all things; but here come the others."

Upon which several additional cavaliers appeared and formed altogether a formidable body, who collectively wore every appearance of being a band of freebooters. They paused for some time, and the whole of their discourse consisted in expressions of surprize at the absence of Chacal, who was evidently their captain, and of speculations as to when he might be restored to them.

During this short rest, they expressed unbounded joy at having ultimately reached their home, regretted the toil and fatigue expended in an unsuccessful search after their leader, and then turning their horses' heads towards the ascent of the mountain, gradually disappeared from before Mobarek and Khoshboo.

It may be imagined with what intense interest the houseless wanderers lent their ears to what they had just heard. Their hearts rose in their mouths, their pulses beat with double speed, and a thousand schemes immediately came into their heads. Khoshboo, with

all a woman's quickness, was the first to perceive the advantages likely to accrue from the disclosures thus overheard.

"Joy of my soul," she exclaimed, "I see it all, your Khoshboo already sees you on your throne. We must now be upon our guard, active and circumspect. All depends upon you, Mobarek! If you be a tolerable actor, and will condescend to personify the hateful Chacal but for a short time, ere a week has elapsed you will again possess your musnud."

"I will do anything (but commit an injustice) to right myself and to please you," said Mobarek. "I also perceive the whole scheme, and please Allah! I will immediately attempt to accomplish that which our good destiny has so evidently placed before us. Did I not foretell this morning, O my Khoshboo, that some speedy re-action would succeed to this unnatural state of suffering."

It was then agreed between them that Mobarek should follow the band of freebooters into their retreat, and personifying Chacal, appear before them. He would then give them a woeful

account of his failure in the scheme of bringing away booty from Cashgar. Then stating how much he had been disconcerted by the earthquake, he would cheer them by laying before them a new prospect of gain, no less than plundering the treasure contained in the palace of the King of Cashgar, to the success of which he would stake his head, seeing that he possessed one, now in his company, a woman, an inmate of the royal harem, well acquainted with all the avenues of the palace, and who could conduct them to the very spot where the gold was deposited, having once been herself depositer of the keys of the treasure house.

Having invented this scheme, they passed the night in anxious expectation of the morning, determined to put it into execution.

As soon as Mobarek was on foot, having warned Khoshboo not to leave her hiding place, but patiently to wait his return, he set off in search of the habitation of the freebooters. Tracking the footsteps of the horses, which after much winding gradually led to the entrance of a large cavern, he stopt for a moment to take breath and to collect his

thoughts preparatory to the part he was about to act.

He had scarcely paused a minute, before he beheld the very youth seated on a stone at the mouth of the cavern, whom he had seen in conversation with the elder horseman; and who having caught sight of him, arose, apparently greatly surprized, and then uttered an exclamation of joy, which echoed throughout the place and brought many of his companions forth.

"Come! come!" he cried out, "the Aga is come!" Then running towards Mobarek, he said, seizing his hand and kissing it, "You are welcome, your place has long been empty."

Others also came running forward, and among them Cheikh Omar, who appeared to be the second in command after Chacal, and he made lively demonstrations of pleasure upon beholding Mobarek.

Mobarek in the meanwhile was slow to speak, fearing lest the sound of his voice might awaken suspicion, but at length feigning to be ill, he said with a sick man's accent,

"Allah alone is strong, alone is powerful—we, what are we?"

"What has happened?" was exclaimed by various voices, whilst the whole assembly gazed at each other insurprize, seeing that, indeed, there was a great dissimilitude between Mobarek's voice and Chacal's.

"Is he ill?—perhaps he is changed, can this be Chacal Beg?" were questions asked in various tones, until Mobarek again spoke and said,

"I have been ill—my voice has long failed, but please Allah, I shall be better after I have related my story. My good destiny has turned upon me—takdeer has been perverse—I have lost everything, my horse, my arms. Oh that city without a saint, Cashgar!—Inshallah, we will burn its father still! But give ear, if I have not brought away riches, I have with me what will lead to them, so do not allow yourselves to despond—Chacal Beg will still lead you on to riches."

Upon hearing these words, the assembled gang began to stare and wonder; they felt a sort of creeping incredulity as to the person before them, for both in manner and voice he was entirely different to their captain, but still

his face was not to be mistaken, and that was too evident a proof to be rejected. They flocked around him and requested him to explain what he meant, and how he came to be possessed of a guide to the King of Cashgar's treasures.

He made them sit down in a circle, and then with much ingenuity devised a tale suited to their capacities, by which he showed that during the earthquake, when he was about making a grand stroke which would have secured great riches, he was seized, and dragged before the authorities, his horse and everything he possessed taken from him, and he would, perhaps, have been put to death, had he not excited compassion in one of the King's favourite ladies, who having obtained his pardon, he was expelled the city. That during this event, from his knowledge in magic, he had discovered one of that lady's attendants, who being favourable to him, agreed to accompany him hither, and she was ready to assist in furtherance of the enterprize which he now proposed to them, adding, that she was deposited at some little distance, ready immediately to proceed. He proposed to enter the city at nightfall, the band

being disguised as peasants, armed, and collected into a body, nothing was so easy, with the knowledge of the avenues of the palace, as to enter at once, overcome the small resistance which might be made, and carry off abundance of treasure before the authorities could be roused.

As the whole gang possessed unbounded confidence in their captain, knowing him to be a magician and capable of doing wonderful things, they did not for a moment doubt the practicability of his scheme, and when he finished his explanation, they expressed their approbation by exclamations of *Mashallah* and *Evallah.*

Mobarek seeing how well he had succeeded, took upon himself the airs of one in command, and although aware that he was remarked and gazed at with wonder and suspicion, still by constantly hinting how great was the power of magic, he confirmed them in the belief that the change which they observed in him was produced by that agency.

Having made every preparation to depart

on the following day, and being provided with a good horse as well as arms, both for himself and Khoshboo, his supposed slave, he then pointed out at the same time, the precise spot where he was to be found in case of need.

He found Khoshboo in an agony of apprehension, lest he should have failed; but when he explained the whole extent of his good luck, and the manner in which he had brought the gang to coincide in his scheme, her joy knew no bounds. She would have rushed into his arms and embraced him, but he entreated her to recollect that he was still a monster, and it was only by continuing to be such for a short time longer, that he could be released, and restored to himself.

Mobarek was a most extraordinary character for an eastern monarch. With all the powers of despotism in his hands, he always possessed a conscience, and misfortunes having been decreed to him, they had greatly improved his original excellent nature, adding much to the

delicacy and refinement of that conscience. He sat down near Khoshboo and said:

"Light of my eyes, my Khoshboo—I approach you for advice and consolation. We are now come to that pass, that I see blood must be shed in order to obtain possession of my throne; blood must be shed, and that only by my own hand. The usurper must die ere I can be restored to my rights; tell me, can I perform so hateful an act with the fear of God before my eyes?"

"What!" exclaimed Khoshboo, "are you to be deprived of your throne, your possessions, your very existence; is a wretch to steal even to your face; and can you doubt whether he be worthy of death? The thief who steals five tomans is he not condemned to death by law; what then can the man expect who steals a kingdom? Fear not, dearest husband; kill, by all means, kill—only be careful to say *Bismillah*, before you entirely cut off the traitor's head, and then all will be well. Fear not, fear not—in the name of the prophet kill."

Mobarek only required the concurrence of his dearest friend and adviser to reconcile him to performing an act which he abhorred, and having obtained that consolation, his mind became easy. He felt that the only mode of destroying the spell by which he was bound, was to destroy the cause of that spell, and having so done, he became certain that his own features would return to him.

Matters having been prepared for the departure of the expedition on the following morning, we must now return to the position of affairs at the court of Cashgar.

Chacal was a monster of iniquity, a coarse, sensual, and rapacious villain. As soon as he began to find that he was secure in the possession of the throne, and that he could proceed with safety in a career to which, by no stretch of imagination his thoughts had ever aspired, the iniquity of his nature became thoroughly manifest.

'Tis true that he had found much to contend with in the outset, but power and submission being already made to his hand, and cre-

dulity ready to confirm what the eye acknowledged, his course of iniquity was fully open to him.

Sometimes, indeed, the acts of the usurper were almost too offensive, and too much at variance with the conduct of his predecessor for even a native of Cashgar to submit to without a thought or a doubt. His total ignorance upon all matters of government produced in the minds of his grand vizier and his secretaries of state, a conviction that he was overtaken by madness, and having made up their minds upon that head, they could never conceive that it could be attributed to any other cause. His principal characteristic was love of money—a lust for gold. His whole soul was absorbed in the one desire of amassing riches, and now feeling that he was possessed of power, and saw before him a whole nation which he contemplated as the mine into which he might dig without intermission, he did not care what acts of cruelty he committed, provided he gratified his ruling passion.

The people began to feel oppressed, and

comparisons were freely drawn between the present conduct of the sovereign and what it had been before the earthquake. Certain facts related by the barber Teeztrash, and confirmed by the journeyman cap-maker, which at first had been received as fiction, were now firmly believed as true; and thinking people began to conclude, that Cashgar had been entirely bewitched.

Prayers were privately put up at the mosques for a change; the dealers in magic, wise men and astrologers were consulted, and it was hoped, when the vengeance of Allah had been appeased, that some supernatural interposition would be manifested, which would as miraculously dispel the scourge as it had been miraculously applied.

At the particular time to which we allude Chacal was entirely absorbed in taking account of his money in the underground apartments where it was deposited, and there he passed much of his time, devising plans for securing more. His heart swelled with exultation when he found how large was the treasure

of which he was possessed, but still he required more. He publicly announced that a certain sum was necessary, and ordered it to be exacted by force if requisite.

Already the work of extortion had begun. The Jews first, those unpitied objects of robbery, under various pleas were despoiled of their goods. Presents were exacted from the rich, whilst no scheme of duplicity was left untried to secure an interest in matters where merchandize was concerned. The labours of the bastinado were in full activity upon the refractory from morning till night in the courts of the palace: no one felt safe in the possession of even the commonest necessaries.

One act of cruelty led on to another, until the whole city was thrown into a continuous state of apprehension. The immediate attendants of the palace became lax in their respective duties, the person of the Shah was hated, and each in his inmost heart fervently prayed that every day might prove the tyrant's last.

Such was the state of things on the day when Mobarek and Khoshboo, followed by the

gang of freebooters, approached the city of Cashgar. They entered just before the closing of the gates, by two and three at a time, and leaving their horses in an open space near one of the caravanserais under the care of two of the gang, they took refuge in sòme adjacent ruined buildings for the night. At a preconcerted hour, the whole gang were to collect near the secret entrance of the palace, headed by Mobarek and Khoshboo, and then picking their way stealthily along, they would find access through avenues well known to their leaders into the gardens of the harem, and ultimately into the very body of the building where the King reposed. When the moment for enterprize was come, Khoshboo felt the alarm natural to woman's weakness, lest it should fail; but Mobarek finding himself at the very gates of his own palace, treading the soil of his native city, and exerting himself for the welfare of his subjects, so much was his heart inspired by feelings of conscious dignity, by a sense of what was his duty as well as his due, that his arm was strengthened and his determination inflexible.

"My Khoshboo!" he exclaimed, "in another hour your husband will be King—fear not, but proceed."

Then turning towards his followers he said:

"Keep silence, and follow; let no man shed blood till I give the word—follow me and observe my actions."

They entered the secret gate unmolested; no one was astir; it would seem that the guards had been bribed to silence, so little appearance of watchfulness was there about the palace. They glided silently through some deserted courts until they entered the gardens of the harem. Here Mobarek stopped and marshalled his followers afresh.

Every step was now well known to him and Khoshboo, for often had they enjoyed these shaded retreats in each other's society. Mobarek here put up a mental prayer, entreating the protection of Allah and the prophet, then drawing his scimitar, clasped it well in his hand, and proceeded to the chamber where he was sure, from information gathered in the city, that Chacal was wont to repose. Khosh-

boo was close to him—he ordered the gang to pause and be prompt. He then cautiously stepped forward, and perceived that the great curtain was lowered over the window straightway ordered it to be withdrawn, in order that it might throw light within, and then without more disguise, boldly threw open the door and entered, followed by his wife. He saw a bed extended in the midst, and at the foot thereof two women asleep. The noise he made on entering awoke the principal person, who, rising from beneath the embroidered coverlid, instantly discovered to Mobarek his own face.

He required no other indication to ascertain that he had secured the proper victim, and without giving him time to defend himself, flew upon him, sword in hand. Chacal, in the meanwhile, at a glance seeing himself opposed to himself, became aware of his position, at one bound stood on his feet, and seizing a pillow, attempted to ward off the blow about being dealt to him, exclaiming at the same time:

"*Amân! Amâm!* pity, oh pity!"

His gang, suddenly hearing the well-

known voice of their captain, advanced in a hurry to the spot, but arrived just in time to behold the breaking of the enchantment which had bound the lawful King of Cashgar. With one fell blow having brought his antagonist to the ground, Mobarek followed it by another, which severed his head from his body, and at that moment he felt that he was himself again. Khoshboo perceiving his well known countenance, fell at his feet in rapture, and the whole harem having by this time been roused, women, guards, and eunuchs came running in great haste from all quarters, and produced a scene which may, perhaps, be better imagined than described. The lawful King, sword in hand, standing near the headless body of his enemy, was surrounded by those who had approached him, kneeling with their foreheads touching the earth, whilst the gang of freebooters, startled and astonished at what had taken place, remained in a state of bewilderment, uncertain how to act.

"See," said Mobarek, as he pointed to the dead man, "see the effects of a lie—my face has been a lie, and this wretched man's face

has been a lie also—such is and such will ever be the fruit of all deceit—sooner or later it must be visited by evil."

His first act was to send for the barber Teeztrash; his next to order an assembly of the great officers of state, whilst he insisted that the body of the traitor Chacal should remain exactly in the same position in which it had fallen, to be guarded by his own gang, who were ordered to remain in attendance.

When the extraordinary event, which had occurred in the palace, was known throughout the city, a sensation was created such as had never been before witnessed. It was quite certain that a strange man had arrived, and killed the King, but marvellous to say, the King was there still. Such was the news. It was also certain that the barber Teeztrash had been sent for. Every one was in expectation of something still more miraculous. The hearts of men leaped into their mouths with joy, at the bare idea of a change.

The barber Teeztrash followed the King's officer with fear and trembling; he had frequently spoken his mind upon the state of

things, and made disclosures of all that had taken place in his shop, asserting thereby how much he was convinced that magic had been resorted to in giving Cashgar a bad King in exchange of a good one. He, therefore, became the prey of uncertainty and apprehension. As he approached the palace, and was conducted through its avenues leading into the harem, his apprehension increased, for he found them thronged with the dignitaries and officers of the court, their faces full of anxiety, and eagerly pressing forward to satisfy their curiosity.

As soon as Teeztrash appeared before Mobarek, the King having obtained a glimpse of his person, called to him by name, and said:

"Stand forward, O man, look you hither.—See this head," pointing to that of the prostrate Chacal, "say, is this the head you operated upon on the day of the earthquake?" The barber taking it up with great reverence, inspected it and exclaimed:

"As I am your slave, it is—here is the slit in the ear which I remarked."

Then said the Shah, before the assembled

crowd, vizier, dignitaries, men of the law and others,

"Then it is plain that this is my enemy, the necromancer, the man who has worn my face, and whose face I have worn. This is the miscreant whom, through the mercy of Allah, I have slain, and am thus restored to the throne of my ancestors."

Rejoicings, such as had never before been known, broke out in the city of Cashgar, and throughout the whole territory thereof. The reign of terror was over, and people blessed their true and lawful King. Mobarek having dismissed the gang of freebooters with much of the treasure which he had promised to them, recommended them never more to appear in his dominions, and despatched troops to see them well out of it. He also sent proper messages and admonitions to his brother-in-law, Kamram, giving him many salutary warnings and recommending him, who professed to set the law of Allah always before him, not to restrict his actions to words alone, but to shew his faith by being charitable as well as holy. He sent a new cloak to the old man of God, and ordered him to

wear it or incur his displeasure, for that he would not allow so unblushing a hypocrite as he to live in his neighbourhood, a disgrace to his profession.

Having performed these acts, he then devoted himself to his beloved Khoshboo, cherished her as the greatest of all earthly treasures, and the annals of Cashgar relate that no King was ever before or after so beloved and respected as Mobarek Shah. As for Teeztrash, the barber, there was no end to his sagacity, and all in good time he became grand vizier to the illustrious state of Cashgar.

After I had complimented the Mirza upon his story, assuring him that so far as my opinion went, he had redeemed his pledge of giving an appearance of truth to a miracle, I asked him whether he had any ulterior object in view in relating it to the Shah.

"What can I say," answered my friend, "perhaps yes, perhaps no. The truth is, in this our Persia, and particularly in this our court, we are overrun with hypocrisy—go where you

will, we find men with two characters, or as the vulgar saying is, beards with two colours. I wished to shew, in the character of Chacal, how impossible it is for a man to succeed long in disguising his real disposition, and in the person of Mobarek, to illustrate the truth that no station, however exalted, is exempt from the vicissitudes of life. It was my aim to denounce that common species of duplicity, where the wicked man deceives his neighbour whilst his face wears the appearance of honesty, as well as to point out how providence frequently, by unexpected means, induces the discovery of guilt."

"As you live," said I, "you have not spoken ill; a sharp witted nation like yours will perceive how strongly precept can be inculcated by parable; but tell me, how am I, a stranger, to distinguish the hypocrite from the true man?"

"You," said my friend, "who are new to our manners, who are unacquainted with the interior of our harems, and ignorant of the first rudiments of our education, cannot but be unpractised in our tricks and deceptions. Now

what are the elements of our education, but the elements of deceit! The first thing we are taught is the art of making compliments, *chum wa hum* as it is called—a child who can scarcely lisp, particularly be he a prince, or the son of an Omrah, will exercise his little tongue in pouring forth a string of phrases of which he knows not the meaning, and utter them with appropriate gestures, as if he were the first of men. But it is among our priesthood, that the vice I complain of is the most conspicuous. A very large turban is one of the insignia of godliness—some of the Mollahs of Ispahan wear them of immense sizes, and in addition have ample sleeves to their cloaks, with large skirts, in order effectually to cover their hands and feet when they are seated, by way of shewing humility and deference, whilst at the same time, it is their ambition to be ushered to the uppermost places at the *mejlis* or assembly. They would be incensed were they not so distinguished; for all their outward demonstrations of piety are only put on as a passport to obtain respect. Then they sigh forth holy aspirations and quote largely from the Koran. But see

our praying places, which are conspicuously erected, high and open to the gaze of all the world, at the city gates or in the market places, there you will often see men ostentatiously saying their prayers, apparently absorbed in holy meditation, whilst their object is to acquire a reputation for sanctity. The persons who thus exhibit themselves, generally wear a mortified look, particularly in the month of the Ramazan, to announce to the world how rigid is their fast, and they are most scrupulous upon all things clean and unclean. They will break any vessel that has been touched by impure lips, or used for unlawful purposes — they study the uses of all such vessels—some to honour, some to dishonour. All meats are well known to them, in their clean and unclean qualities, and they will condemn a man to the miseries of Jehanum for ever, who may have transgressed in the smallest particular, provided he has so done to be seen by man, whilst they will pass over in silence some flagrant act of deceit or iniquity. Now it appeared to me, that in the character of Chacal I have exemplified the hypocrite, who under

the face of one eminently good and beloved, performed acts the most odious, and the most to be reprobated."

"I fear," said I, "that as long as you are governed by a despotic King, from whom alone emanates all advancement and distinction, that duplicity will be one of the principal vices of your court. Where there is no independence of character, there can be but little individual exertion, and where there is no individual exertion, the general well-being is at a low ebb."

"What can I say?" remarked my friend; "you speak of a thing of which we know nothing—what means independence? it means nothing to us, who are never certain whether what we are toiling to obtain, be it riches, be it other worldly advantages, will remain ours beyond the moment of actual possession. A despotic Shah, an injured vizier, a grasping favourite, a corrupt judge are all leagued against a nation's weal, and the system of government, which they induce, makes slaves of us all."

"And will the Shah understand," said I, "can he comprehend all the recondite meaning contained in the story?"

"If he does not," said the Mirza, "it will be my business to make him understand; we have our own modes of conveying unpleasant truths to royal ears."

"But supposing he did comprehend," said I, "and was willing to correct abuses, what have you to propose by way of remedy? Have you any specifics for making corrupt statesmen honest?"

"As Allah is the true Allah," said the Mirza, "I have never thought of any remedy beyond the *felek* and the scymitar. Have you any remedy to propose? You, I know in your country, do many strange things, and adopt contrivances which were never thought of since the world began; perhaps you may have a remedy against thieves and liars?"

"You do not say ill," said I; "you will perhaps not believe me when I tell you that we have provided a remedy against such an evil."

"Speak," said my friend, with great animation; "whatever you will say, I am ready to hear, and what is more to believe."

"Well then," said I, "without recurring to the aid of talismans, charms, or diviners, we

simply allow every one, who chooses, to write down, print on paper, and publish to the world his thoughts and observations upon the actions of men, and to give an account of passing events. This scrutiny, which is subject to certain laws, is the great secret by which we controul dishonesty, and secure integrity, and this would be the remedy which I would propose in this country, against the deceit and hypocrisy of which you complain."

"*Astafarallah*, heaven forbid?" exclaimed the Mirza—"what words are these? would you fill the city with poisonings and murder—would you throw the whole nation into one universal turmoil of rage and violence? You do not know the Persians! however smooth-tongued in their speech, and polished in their manners they may appear, yet vanity is their ruling passion, and there is not the lowest mule driver who would bear to be criticized and commented upon, without a desire for revenge. No, no," said my friend, shaking his head, "keep to your modes of securing public virtue, we must keep to ours, and we have only one, which is the stick. A good felek and four

stout tent pitchers, will do more for us than all your newspapers."

The remainder of our conversation, which continued to embrace the same subject, is not worthy of being recorded, and after having sufficiently puzzled my friend upon the nature of the liberty of the press, of the manner in which it acted upon the whole nation, and upon its advantages as well as the contrary, I left him, securing a promise that he would not fail to communicate to me any future stories he might narrate.

VISIT VI.

It was not long before I paid another visit to my friend; it was the opening of spring—the winter had passed away—the Persians were shedding their furs, and the trees were in the bud. The Mirza informed me that it was the custom for the Shah, at this season, to go through a course of spring medicines, when he kept to his private apartments, dressed in a sick costume, and then indulged himself in the luxuries of literature, calling upon him for an appropriate and entertaining story. To meet such emergency, the Mirza informed me that he had composed a tale, which he thought might be adapted to the temper of a King in physic, and invited me to drink coffee and sherbet with him, when he would relate it, if I so pleased. I was charmed with his courtesy and attention, and did not lose a moment in

obeying his call. At the appointed hour, I went to his house, when after giving me a most cordial and flattering reception, he frankly avowed that he was much pleased to be able to rehearse his story before an auditor like me, before he imparted it to the Shah, and added, that he would be loth to have an audience of his own countrymen, who, perhaps, might take some unfair advantage, and excite the Shah's anger against him, for having narrated to them that which ought first to meet the Shah's ear.

We were soon seated, and after some preliminary talk without which nothing serious is undertaken in Persia, the Mirza began as follows:

STORY OF COSSIM THE STUDENT.

" One of the most assiduous students in the College of Shah Sultan Hussein at Ispahan, when it was first instituted, was Cossim, a youth of the most fervid imagination, and of a very enthusiastic turn of mind. He devoted himself to study from his earliest youth, in so

ardent a manner, that confinement began to impair his health, notwithstanding the strength and symmetry of his person. Being naturally contemplative, he pursued the study of theology with a zeal and fervour that had never before been witnessed in the schools, fasting often, and keeping himself secluded from the world for whole days and weeks together. He soon exhausted every book relating to the true faith of Islam, and finding that its provisions did not sufficiently withdraw him from the world, he explored the books and doctrines of the Suffies, which he found better suited to his ideas and aspirations, so much so, that he devoted himself with redoubled zeal to carrying into practice the notions which they inculcated.

He was led to contemplate his body as a mere case or machine, fitted up as the receptacle of an essence, and that essence immortal, and loathing its impurities, his whole existence was passed in attempts to mortify it, in order that he might enjoy to the full, the expansion of his better nature. He gradually began to esteem all men as beings full of natural corruption:

hating their sensualities and abominating their mean pursuits, and growing into spiritual pride, he looked upon worldly objects quite below one who had (so he hoped) succeeded in creating a being infinitely better adapted to approach, worship and magnify his Creator, than any one of the multitude which composes the mass of mankind. He had frequently heard of the famous gardens of Irem, and had read that enthusiastic book the Humayan Nameh, in which its author in one of his religious transports exclaims, "*Ya Khodawend!* I have escaped from the storms and vicissitudes of the world, and it appears to me that I have reached the centre of the garden of Irem, since I have acquired that peace of mind, enjoyed by those who have quitted the world to serve thee!" His imagination was fired by the possibility of the actual existence of this blessed spot on the earth's surface, for he had read that it had been planted and prepared by the ancient King Schedad Bendad, in Arabia the Happy, for the habitation of a pure race of spiritual men like himself, and he began to consider why he should not flee to it as a patrimony to which,

from his principles and propensities, he was lawfully entitled, and thus be freed from the intrusions and grossness of desires, incident to this world of flesh and corruption.

These ideas gradually expanded in his mind, until he began to think it not only easy, but incumbent upon him to realize them, and he daily craved for inspirations to strengthen him in his pursuit. He determined to retire from the world for forty days and forty nights, for the purposes of fasting and prayer, during which time, he made no doubt that he would receive some intimation from above, which would settle the firmness of his resolve beyond the power of change. To this effect, he sallied forth unseen from the cell in his college, and took himself to the mountain skirting the plain of Ispahan, and selecting a cavern for his dwelling, he there subjected his body to the severest mortifications, and so reduced himself by fasting, want of sleep and mental excitement, that at the end of the time of his probation, he might be fairly said to be but a few degrees removed from positive insanity; but he was resolved to search the gardens of Irem

—he had grappled with his odious body, he had discomfitted its carnal propensities, he felt that he was fitted to enjoy the society of refined and purified spirits, and armed with a certainty that God had approved of his holy aspirations, without delay he set off for those countries, where he supposed the object of his pilgrimage was situated.

He took neither letter nor money, but with shoes on his feet, a skin thrown loosely over his shoulders, and armed with a simple staff, he began his journey, trusting to providence and his own powers of endurance for daily sustenance. Such a personage did not fail to be well received and hospitably treated, and Cossim found no impediment in his path, as he journeyed on foot to the shores of the Persian Gulph. Reaching Abousheher, he was taken across the gulph, purely for the love of God, by a boatman who was on the point of departure, and was landed on the opposite coast of Bahrein. Here having attained a new country, among a new people, speaking a different language to his own, his difficulties began, but nothing daunted, he pursued his

course through the heart of Arabia, carrying provisions just enough to keep body and soul together, and journeyed in the direction where he expected to find his ultimate and much cherished resting place. The wild population and the arid deserts, which met his path at every step, would have appalled many a stouter heart than his, but being upheld by enthusiasm and religious conviction he did not despond. He travelled on with great weariness, over the most desolate country that the imagination can conceive, and at length reached a region so mountainous and stony, that to any one but an enthusiast a miracle from heaven only could have created therein anything to be called a garden. Here was a thirsty wilderness, intersected with arid rocks tossing their summits to the skies, whilst in the hot fiery valleys below there was nothing to relieve the traveller from the scorching rays of the sun, save the occasional projection of some friendly rock.

Cossim having clambered to a prominent summit looked around him with dismay; his heart began to fail—he saw no indications of

a retreat, such as he had imagined, nor did he meet with any one who could direct his steps. All looked more like the fragment of a world, than an avenue to one of its brightest spots—here a chasm yawned, there black rocks in impenetrable array formed a barrier—at a distance rose crags and ridges, giving the appearance of a gigantic saw to the horizon, whilst in the foreground nothing was seen but burnt up stubble, bounded by more rocks, with occasionally a serpent winding its stealthy way through the crevices.

Day was coming to a close—occasionally might be heard the wild cry of the jackal, or in the distance the roar of the lion. Cossim looked about him for some place where he might pass the night in safety, and espying a cave in an adjacent mountain he repaired thither as fast as his wearied limbs could carry him.

Having reached the cavern, he found it to consist of a deep indentation of the solid rock, the interior of which seemed to wind away into intricate avenues, looking dark and mysterious. On its surface he remarked some indications of sculpture, as if the place

had once been used for purposes of habitation —but solitude, deep appalling solitude, overwhelmed not only it, but the whole region round about. Cossim gazed around him with dismay, but at length the necessity which he felt for protection overpowering his courage, he knelt down and poured forth his whole soul in prayer. He prayed so fervently that the surrounding rocks rung in echoes to his voice, and the call he made for support was repeated in long and mysterious accents from one eminence to another.

"Oh Allah," he said, "who art Lord of the desert as well as of the fertile paradise, who art about the paths of thy creatures, be they in the agonies of death or in the safe abodes of happiness, I implore thy protection—strengthen my weakness, infuse thy holy and reviving spirit into my drooping soul, and give thy servant courage and perseverance to encounter the difficulties which surround him."

He prayed long in this strain, and had paused awhile to take breath, when he heard a slight noise in the interior of the cavern as of footsteps; turning his head and

straining his eyes to the utmost, to his astonishment he perceived a figure which, owing to the gloom, at first he could not discriminate whether it were man or beast, until at length he espied a stately old woman bending her steps slowly towards him.

Her appearance was almost supernatural, for although she possessed the dress and the body of a common living soul, yet there was that expression in her eye and in the cast of her features, which evidently announced a being who had dealings with powers not of earth. In truth she was a *Peri banou*, or Peri of the first quality; and she soon accosted the modest youth uttering words which both astonished and soothed him.

Extending her right hand which she pointed to the sky, whilst she clasped her garment with the left, she exclaimed in a voice piercing, and at the same time, impressive,

"By what miracle hast thou reached this spot, oh youth! where none come, but beings who seek for heaven and spurn the earth?"

Cossim rose from his seat and stood upright as she approached, and kissing the hem of her garment, said:

"It has been a chance, indeed, a caprice of destiny which has brought me here—but, woman or witch, peri or jin, whatsoever you be, in truth you see before you one who seeks heaven and spurns the earth, and has come hither in search of the garden of Irem, being disgusted with the filth and impurities of base humanity. Will you direct my steps thither? Oh grant me this prayer, and Cossim will pray for you till he feels by his progress in excellence, that Allah has heard his prayer."

"Thou art beside thyself, oh youth," exclaimed the woman, "the garden of Irem seekest thou? it shall be opened unto thee, but thou prayest for that of which thou knowest nothing. We reign here absolute —we can do thee good—lay down to rest and fear nothing—all shall be granted as thou willest."

"Blessings be upon you," said Cossim, "I am indeed weary and much in want of rest; and with you for a protectress I will lay myself down in full confidence, that refreshed as I hope to be, you will to-morrow be my guide

and seek for me that which I cannot by myself discover."

Upon that he extended himself on the ground, and as he closed his eyes his ears were struck with the sound of harmonious voices that soothed his senses into sleep, as they chaunted words to this effect:

Sleep, Cossim, sleep, and take thy rest,
Oblivion seek, thy sins confessing;
Subdue thy cares, for life at best
Is but the vision of a blessing,

Vain is your toiling here below
For peace of mind or tranquil joy,
The sand of life must cease to flow
E'er rest can be without alloy.

Vain is thy scheme of heavenly purity
Till thy appointed task be done.
Thou child of earth! thy only surety
Is trust in God, in God alone.

Cossim was soon plunged into a profound sleep. His lungs played within his breast with the wholesome freedom of health, and had any one observed him, it would have been evident

that his mind was in full activity, for there was communicated to his expressive features a dream-like emotion, which though calm and gentle, was the herald of much inward working. His cavern friend had, indeed, been a friend to him, for she was his guide to those very scenes and places, which he had attempted to seek unaided.

He found himself, though still in the same desolation we have before described, at the foot of an immense wall, composed of cristal of different tints, but sufficiently diaphonous to permit the view of a tract of country totally different to that in which he stood. It was really, seeing through a glass darkly; but instead of rocks, he could discern trees, instead of a brown arid soil, he saw verdant slopes and grassy banks, and instead of a thirsty wilderness, he discovered flowing streams bordered by a cheerful vegetation. He walked along and around the wall in full hope of meeting some opening through which he might effect an entrance, until he came to a clear piece of cristal, so clear that he could perceive everything distinctly within the wall; there he stopt,

his eyes fascinated by the objects presented to them. There in truth he saw what his utmost ingenuity could never have conceived, and then exclaimed with swelling rapture:

"The gardem of Irem! the garden, the blessed, the holy retreat!"—Such a profusion of beauties, so glorious a prospect was before him, that he pressed his hands against the rock in anger at the barrier opposed to him, when to his breathless astonishment, he found the hard substance cede, become as soft and pliant as wool, and then with scarcely an effort, he fairly walked through the wall as through water, and straightway found himself within the enclosure.

Then, indeed, his ravished eyes beheld sights which no pen or tongue can describe. He advanced up a verdant knoll, his senses entranced in delight and astonishment, and from its summit he gained an extended and a general view of this delicious and celebrated garden.—What a transition from the thirsty arid wilderness!

The surface of the ground was agreeably

varied by gentle slopes leading to open flat spots which again diverged to higher hills, giving to the eye a long and pleasing succession of vistas, producing alternately waving lines and shadowy places. This was ornamented by trees either in individual grandeur, united in graceful clumps, or thickly condensed into umbrageous woods. They consisted of every sort of tree that the imagination can conceive, the hardy trees of the north being blended with the delicate and waving vegetation of tropical climates, and so combined, that a supernatural taste had apparently been exercised in grouping their shapes and matching their colours, exercising that management in trees, which the florist exercises in his beds and lawns. Every object was so disposed, that the view was carried on without hindrance to the eye, light being scattered about in masses and gleams, bringing forward the objects which most required protrusion, whilst those of less consequence were thrown into deep shadows. Green in all its various hues, that colour so admirably adapted by the great artificer of nature to the eyesight of his creatures, was

the principal colour throughout the landscape, but was so ingeniously diversified, as not to be universal.

Freshness and life were the characteristics of the whole scene, and Cossim in beholding it felt such a rush of health and spirits in each fibre of his frame, that he might be said to inhale happiness through every sense. But this was not a tenantless paradise, for buildings of the most perfect models met the eye in varied succession, some just peeping through the trees, others more exposed to view, and others still nearer entirely developed, exhibiting the happiest combination of taste. Water either in brilliant running streams, in mirror-like sheets, murmuring in fountains or roaring in cascades, everywhere so artificially managed, that it was made either to reflect or to undulate in waves as best adapted to the scenery through which it flowed. The atmosphere of the heavens seemed to be entirely adapted to the spot. The air came so softly to the feeling, and was inhaled so imperceptibly, that it infused content and calm, whilst an undescribable freshness gave elasticity to the body, and

encouraged life to spend itself in activity. Cossim threw himself down on the soft grass in deep ecstacy, contemplating the scene before him, and wondering how such things could be —here indeed was happiness on earth—here indeed did repose from earthly cares and vicissitudes appear prepared for him, and here did he hope, in grateful humility, to be allowed to pass that portion of his existence which might be deducted from his immortality.

Having well sated his eyes with the beauties of the landscape, he turned them towards the habitations by which it was studded, and there he perceived the inhabitants, who seemed to pursue no avocations but those of pleasure and enjoyment, for no where did he perceive anything like labour. Some were seated in groups, others carried about in litters, others again were gliding over the surface of the lake, or seated on the margin of the running streams, but none seemed devoted to labour.

He was determined to approach, in order to view them more narrowly, and when he had determined upon the path to pursue, he selected the most magnificent building as the

one to examine first. It was abundantly spacious, some parts entirely open to the air, others enclosed; there was a beauty and a majesty about its structure which no rules of architecture could define. At once it struck the eye as beautiful, so inimitable were the combinations of proportion and fitness. Nothing was seen, for which a good reason was not immediately suggested; there were no ornaments merely for ornament's sake, but the requisite parts were all ornaments, whilst all the ornaments were requisite parts. It was light but solid, gay though majestic, convenient though apparently adapted to pleasure. By what happy skill it was fashioned, none but the genius that executed the design could account, but most true it was, that the whole inspired Cossim with the highest idea of the refinement and sagacity of the people by whom it was possessed.

"Indeed," thought he, "how can any but a most perfect building belong to so perfect a paradise of beauty?"

All breathed the air of enchantment, but still there was, apparently, so much of man's inven-

tion throughout the whole scene, that such things he conceived were not incongruous with our earthly state.

He now had sufficiently approached some of the inhabitants to be able to distinguish their persons and appearance. Although they looked like the common descendants of Adam, yet there existed an undefinable something about them, which made them appear fashioned to suit the place, its scenery and its peculiar atmosphere. They looked more polished than plain men and women—all of the same age—young and still sedate, made for life and activity and yet quiescent.

Indeed there was a sort of contemplative look about them, something approaching to the listlessness of the idle and the indolent, which might make a beholder suppose them to be sated with enjoyment. Cossim feeling conscious that his dress and appearance being different to theirs, would attract great attention were he perceived, stole with caution to a spot where several were collected, reposing in listless attitudes, near a lovely pleasure house, where he heard the following colloquy in a lan-

guage totally new to him, but strange to say, of which he could understand every word.

"I am tired of this state of eternal happiness," said a commanding figure; "were it possible to feel some annoyance, even for an hour, it would be some change to us, and happiness would follow misery; but here we live without the power of complaining. Had I rebellion to quell as was my wont during the course of my reign, or could I occasionally live in fear of my life, then this existence might be tolerable, but as it is, it overwhelms from excess of delight."

"Your Majesty is perfectly right in what you say," said a short figure with a halt in his gait, "I declare that I often find myself longing for misery, as one often yearns for the appearance of a cloud in a country of eternal sunshine. How I should like to feel some of that feverish doubt and apprehension which so often pervaded my breast during the battle of Angora, or some of that exultation which I enjoyed on seeing the approach of the fallen Bajazet! But since our blessed prophet hath decreed the delights of paradise and hath sent

us to Irem for a foretaste thereof, all we have to do is to sit down and be contented."

"By my beard," said a dignified personage, "when I recollect some of my narrow escapes, particularly in that affair with Ilek Khan, when my gallant elephant dragged him with his trunk from off his horse, and stamped him to pieces with his feet, and consider the peaceable nature of my present existence, I do sometimes wish for excitement and activity—but God is great!" he added with a sigh. "I should like to know Ferdousi's opinion of our present state. I saw him here not long ago."

Cossim was struck with astonishment at the words he heard. Those who had uttered them, were no less personages than the great conqueror Jenghiz, the notorious Timour the lame, and the cruel and enterprizing Nadir Shah. He listened again, and from what he heard, he found that those who were congregated in that particular spot, and occupied that portion of the garden, were characters who had ruled over Asia as Kings, Caliphs, Vakeels, or Emperors. Struck with awe, he was afraid to stir, little considering that the same miracle

which could have changed their worldly natures into their present state, might also operate the same change upon himself; and indeed it was not long ere he discovered that he was no longer the same Cossim who had left Ispahan, an emaciated woe-stricken youth, but that he also partook of the aspect of universal brilliancy which pervaded everything about him. His person was renovated, his garments were fashioned to the place, and the infirmities of his nature seemed to have been replaced by new and more exalted powers both of mind and body. There was, however, something in his appearance, which struck those who first perceived him as novel, and immediately he was accosted and overwhelmed with inquiries. It was evident that in all the questions addressed to him, a lurking desire to belong to the world might be discerned—they were questions put by beings impatient of ease and undisturbed quiet.

One inquired who was the present possessor of the throne of Persia, and appeared anxious to ascertain its political state; another wished to obtain news of families whose names had

long ceased to exist; others inquired concerning the great men of Asia, who they were and what their pretensions. All seemed to yearn towards objects which might afford them occupation.

As Cossim advanced further into the paradise, he found greater local beauties to admire, and was astonished to meet among its inhabitants with every name that had been famous in the real world. The more he mixed with them, the more he discovered the same desire for excitement, which he had remarked in those whom he had first met—and as time elapsed, and season succeeded season, so did the same feeling creep into the breast of Cossim. Unalloyed prosperity began to sit heavy upon him. He longed for opportunities to exercise the faculties of his mind. An equality of perfection in beings, constituted as himself, seemed to him incongruous; he wished for opportunities to judge between right and wrong —for occasions where exertion was necessary, where he might be refreshed by the vicissitudes of suffering evil and enjoying good. All human good seemed to him as intolerable as

all human evil. Often did he discourse upon his state, with his fellow sufferers in happiness, and he found them all of the same mind.

Once he fell into a profound trance, (for stated sleep did not form part of the nature of the inhabitants of Irem) and as he lay so entranced in one of the deepest shades of the beautiful wilderness, he suddenly perceived before him, a form in every respect, such as belonged to the women of the real world, excepting that in beauty and loveliness it far exceeded anything he had ever seen or that his imagination could conceive to exist. He gazed upon her with wonder, and sudden love, a passion of the most exalted nature became at once rivetted in his heart. She seemed to him to comprehend all he could desire as a possession. The tender interest which beamed in her countenance at his fate, awoke all his affections, and he exerted every sense to catch the words which she addressed to him:

"Cossim, give ear!" she said, in a voice like the sounds of living music, "your desire has been granted. You have been an inhabitant of the garden of Irem—you have now

learnt the fallacy of human desires, when opposed to the dispensations of almighty wisdom. Were man constituted as he is, born for the enjoyment of uninterrupted happiness, he would be endowed with different faculties. The vicissitudes of life to him, are as much part of the frame work of nature, and are intended as much for his benefit, as the night which follows the day, the storms which gather in the heavens and clear the atmosphere he lives in, as the wars and disturbances which occur between nations, and thus keep the population of the globe in a healthy state; learn then to live in the world as one of God's creatures, trusting in him through good and through evil, and be confirmed in this truth, that whatever is, is right—return to your former state, and through the remainder of your life think on me and on my words."

Upon this, Cossim recovered from his trance, and as he looked about him, seeking with his eyes the paradise of which he had been an inhabitant, to his utter astonishment he found himself extended in the very cave where he had reposed under the protection of his tutelary

peri. He stood up, rubbed his eyes, shook himself, and loudly made his voice resound throughout the cavern and the surrounding dell, to ascertain whether he was really a conscious being or not. All was hushed—the same arid region, the same aspect of earthly things surrounded him—but he arose a wise man, instead of the infatuated creature he had been—he exclaimed,

"Allah be thanked for all his mercies!—Cossim is restored to himself, and he will no longer quarrel with his actual state of being." Looking around, he found spread before him food to refresh his body, raiment wherewith to clothe himself properly, and money to speed his way. He called aloud again and again in the hope of inducing his benefactress to return to him before he departed, but no one appeared. Though disappointed, yet convinced that he was cared for, he at length straightway seized his staff, and equipping himself for his journey homewards, bounded down the mountain's side, and full of new ideas and wholesome alacrity, he bent his steps through the dreary wilderness.

His thoughts particularly dwelt upon the vision which had appeared to him in the garden. He enjoyed an indefinite feeling of certainty that he should again behold the fair form which had so entirely ensnared his heart, and he did little else but repeat to himself the words which she had uttered.

"Oh for the possession of such a companion as a reality and for life; existence would then indeed be worth having!" thus he exclaimed to himself as he travelled onwards. The consciousness of being cared for, by a beloved object, which he felt gave a new charm to life, and with this additional feeling to the lesson which he had received, Cossim was restored to be an efficient member of the community for which he had been created.

He reached Ispahan in safety, not without some feelings of shyness at returning to his companions in the Medresseh, where it was his intention to take up his quarters. He returned to his own room in the quadrangle, which he had quitted just three months before, and found it precisely in the state in which he had left it; but as his sudden disappearance had caused con-

siderable astonishment and discussion among the students, so his sudden re-appearance produced great sensation. Some called him a madman, others honoured him as a saint, whilst those who knew him well, and the enthusiastic turn of his character, said, leave him alone, and all will come right again. There was an austere Mollah in the college, one who wore a larger turban than his neighbours, who undertook to question Cossim upon the reason of his long absence, expecting to hear of severer acts of penance than those he had performed in the mountain; but what was his surprise to find, instead of a saint, that he had talked to one who, according to the Mollah's estimation, went far to owning himself an unmitigated sinner. In truth, Cossim's recent adventures had greatly cooled his feverish and excited mind, and the reflections which he was led to make, had not only restored him to a proper view of the world and of his own position in it, but had tended very materially to alter his opinions even upon those matters both civil and religious, which he had before held it sacrilegious to doubt. So much had he devoted

his mind to reflection, that he even began to doubt the truth of our holy Koran and of its divine author. As for the Suffies and their doctrines, he looked upon them as mere dross, esteeming them as so many fools, who threw words to the wind, and inflated their understandings into bubbles. There was, however, one object which had taken fast hold upon his thoughts, and led his understanding in the bondage of delusion. That fair form, which he had seen in his trance, whatever it might be peri, or phantom, having put to flight all his other delusions, reigned supreme in his imagination, and he lived only in the hope of seeing it realized in a human shape. He loved and cherished its recollection with more than the ardour of the most devoted lover; in his waking moments he dwelt with rapture upon the features which had beamed upon him, and in his sleep the beautiful vision ever stood before him.

It was not long before the change which had taken place in Cossim's belief, became known in the college, for being an enthusiast in whatever he did, and consequently no hypo-

crite, he would never restrain himself whenever discussion ensued; he spared neither the rigid true believer, or the mystical suffi, and consequently was hated by both. They were enraged at his open revilings of their doctrines and practices, and he was denounced to the head of the law, as a *kafir*, an infidel, and according to the letter of the Koran, he was deemed *Wajib al catl*, fit for massacre. Possessing many friends on account of the amiability of his character and the sweetness of his temper, he was warned either to recant or to seclude himself, for his destruction perhaps, his expulsion certainly from the college and the city had been decreed; but he heeded no such warnings—his destiny seemed to lead him on to ruin; and totally engrossed by his love for his enchanting vision, he seemed lost to every other consideration. At length the day came, when all that had been foretold him, was about to be accomplished. The college rose simultaneously and headed by the old Mollah in the large turban, Cossim was stript of his priest's dress and of every other appendage, and thrust fairly neck and shoulders

into the street, with strict orders from the Muchtehed or high priest not to be again admitted. Had he resisted, it was intimated to him that the awful decree, making it lawful for any man to slay him, without incurring the penalty of retaliation of blood, was about to be proclaimed against him.

In this denuded and pitiful state, strange to say, his spirits were wonderfully sustained, solely by the hope that his lovely vision would again appear, cheer him by her countenance, and direct him by her advice. He walked slowly and deliberately down the magnificent avenue of the Chahar Bagh, and having reached the bridge of Alaverdi Khan, and the banks of the Zainderood, he sought the shade of an arch, and straightway threw himself full length on the ground to be ready to receive whatever fate might award him, as well as to indulge in the blissful excursions of his wandering fancy. He had not been there long before he heard a coming footstep, but it evidently was not that of a phantom—there was something substantial and corporeal in its tread, and on looking up he beheld a woe-

stricken old man approaching, bearing upon his person all the appearance of misery and decrepitude.

"You are welcome, my son," exclaimed the old man; "do not stir, sit, sit—I am nothing—I am altogether a wretch, worthy no one's notice. I will enjoy the shade as well as yourself; there is that left to me at least; but stir not—I am nothing."

"You have the full power," exclaimed Cossim, "the shade is given to us all—it is God's gift, and as it may be had for nothing, it is given to the great as well as to the small. I too am a thing of nought. I have just been banished from the face of mankind—but Inshallah! please God, I am not without hope."

"That is just the difference between you and me," said the old man, "I am without hope. The world has entirely turned upon me, and I have no hope not even in shadow—here," said he smiling, "I have shadow without hope, now you have both; you have hope and you have shadow."

"What news is this?" said Cossim, looking

well at the old man, from top to toe. "Are you really a man?" he said this in doubt, for he conceived that everything approaching him might straightway resolve itself into a jin or a peri.

"I am indeed a man," said the stranger, "of that I am certain, at least, for I know that all my miseries have come to me from the other sex, and that woman is only another word for misfortune."

"Ah, is it so," exclaimed Cossim, "then we differ greatly! for all my hope comes from woman."

"Abandon it, abandon it," roared out the old man, as if he were impelled by some maddening conviction; "nothing good can come from woman—false! false! all false as her eye and her smile. I have strange stories to relate; you are young—they may be of some use to you—shall I relate them?"

"Speak on, in the name of Allah," said Cossim, "I am all ear. I will give ear until you cry out *tamam*, enough."

"Hear me then," said the old man, as his eye brightened up, and he began as follows:

STORY OF THE OLD MAN WITHOUT HOPE.

Whatever the poets have sung, whatever a love-sick youth in his first passion may have proclaimed, whatever the ravings of the madman Majnoon may have echoed abroad, all did I once fervently believe as relating to the beauties and perfection of womankind. Had you known me young, when full of the vigour and enthusiasm of youth, I entered the world, seeking a heart which would beat responsive to mine, you would not believe that what you now behold was the same being; but I must not allow myself to be carried away by vain ravings, seeing that I have a matter of fact tale to relate.

My father was a man of good birth, or otherwise he would never have been one of the body servants, or *Peish Khedmets*, to the great

Shah Abbas, which he was. He enjoyed considerable influence over the mind of that extraordinary personage, for he could speak to him at times and seasons when others could not, and taking advantage of the humour of the moment, would persuade his royal master, by arts peculiar to an expert courtier, to accede to many things which no other man in the empire would ever dare venture to propose. This influence had reached to such a height, that the greatest nobles, even the grand vizier himself, did not think it beneath their dignity to curry favour with my father, securing his good offices by rich presents, backed by the most fulsome flattery. As I emerged from the harem and got out of the hands of nurses and *Lalehs*, I soon inhaled the intoxicating fumes of the court atmosphere. Being my father's favourite, I became the darling of those who sought his favour, and the flattery which rebounding from him, fell upon me, soon turned my brain, and left me a prey to the most extravagant conceit. At this juncture, a man of great wealth, one of the nobles, seeking

to rise at court and be distinguished by the Shah, became extremely anxious to make himself agreeable to my father, whose services it was much for his interest to secure.

Unfortunately, he was a wicked man—full of deceit, of undeviating falsehood, who never followed the straight path when he could take the crooked one, and in whom raged every quality that renders man odious and dangerous. His first approaches to acquire my father's good will, were by paying great attentions to me. He sought me at all hours—never came empty-handed—made me appropriate presents, and so awakened my too easy vanity that he caused me to deem myself the first of human beings, whilst he stood of course the second in that happy estimation. Thus caressed and honoured, he gradually unfolded the object he had in view, which was to secure my father's influence with the Shah, to raise him in station above the head of a hated and dreaded rival, who was too powerful to be dealt with single handed. The task was difficult,

for my honoured parent had been very considerably bribed by the opposite party, and although he lent a willing ear to the entreaties of my friend, still he shook his head in ominous uncertainty.

At length seeing that his affairs did not proceed with the rapidity he wished, my man of wealth and intrigue devised a mode of securing me most effectually in the meshes of the net which he wove, in order to ensnare me.

He gave a great entertainment of eating, drinking, dancing and fireworks, to which he invited all the great and powerful of the city, and in which his civilities to me were too pointed to be overlooked; wherever my father was not seated, I became the honoured guest, and indeed the honours heaped upon me were quite oppressive. The principal object which my wily friend intended to secure, was no less a thing than my heart and affections, for one who has since been the cause of all my misery and present degraded state.

Immediately opposite to the seat I occupied at the entertainment in the great hall of

audience, was situated, high on the wall near the ceiling, a window which opened into the room below. It was crossed and recrossed with wooden frame work, but not sufficiently closed to prevent the seated guests perceiving persons within, and those persons females. Full as I was of poetry, of susceptibility to soft impressions, heightened as they were by vanity, and at that particular moment excited by the pleasures of the table, I was not long in perceiving that a pair of brilliant eyes were glaring to and fro behind the lattice work, and as I thought especially directed upon me. Instantly my warm blood began to circulate with emotion through my excited frame, my whole soul was condensed in the ardour of my gaze, and my eyes never for a moment forgot to look towards the mysterious window. Of a sudden, when the attention of the assembly was attracted without the apartment to witness an immense discharge of rockets, the window was thrown open and exhibited to my wondering eyes the face and person of a maiden more fascinating than was ever sung by poet.

Bah! Bah! Bah! what Hafiz ever beheld such orbs of light as were seen in those eyes! such a cypress waist, such brilliant complexion! What Saadi ever extolled the expression of features so lovely, or was excited into enthusiasm by the view of so all accomplished a person. I immediately saluted this divinity with every sign of the most profound devotion, when she in return kissing a flower which she held in her hand, then placing it on her heart, threw it close to me, unperceived by any one, and straightway suddenly closed her lattice window. Upon this, like a famished wretch seeking food, I bounded forward, and seizing the flower, carried it with rapture to my lips, making such demonstrations of delight that must have shewn my charmer to what a degree I was entranced with love and adoration. It appeared that I was well understood, for a mutual exchange of glances and passionate looks took place between us during the evening, until the master of the feast, perceiving who were the occupants of the window, in well-feigned anger and astonishment, ordered them away. The maiden who had so suddenly enslaved my

heart, was no less a personage than the daughter of my wily host, who although he feigned ignorance, had in fact planned the whole scheme, whilst his cunning eye had watched the success which attended it. His object in fact was to marry me to his daughter, and thus, through her to secure my father in his favour, and I need not say how well he succeeded. From the moment I first saw her, I became entirely wild with love. I began to write verses, and to sing them—I was stupified with rapture—I grew thin and did not sleep—I succeeded in making known my state to my mistress, who on her side through an old woman, her confidant, informed me that she could not live without me, and thus day by day did we communicate until it was contrived that we should meet, under all the restraints of concealment and decorum so much insisted upon in the harem. The father all the while to keep up appearances with the world, was supposed to be ignorant of this proceeding, afforded every facility, and allowed nothing to impede the ardour of my passion.

I was at length introduced, with great precautions to the chamber of my beloved, when we both fainted from excess of joy; and there we sat, like two kernels in an almond, making protestations of the most ardent affection. I avowed my determination to ask my father's consent for an immediate marriage, swearing by Ali and the twelve Imams, that were he to deny my request, my heart would consume my liver into the ashes of despair. She, on her part, took gentle oaths that she would never marry any other, and that if she did not belong to me, she would take herself to the desert and the wilderness, and there wander alone and deserted among the fawns and the wild beasts, until she should die of grief and melancholy.

However, there was no necessity for so much romance. My father, who really loved me, seeing how much I was in earnest, gave his consent to our marriage, particularly when he heard that my bride brought a good dowry, and in the course of a short time a wedding was performed upon a scale of magnificence fitted to the occasion, much to the discomfiture

of my father-in-law's rival, who thus foresaw that the scale of my father's influence with the Shah would be turned against him.

I continued to be enamoured until the very night of our wedding, when my bride, having inflicted upon me a sound slap in the face for having ventured to sit upon my natural seat instead of my heels, I began to entertain doubts upon the existence of conjugal felicity. I date the beginning of my misfortunes from the occurrence of that concussion; day after day more specimens of her knowledge in that art were exhibited, until the conclusion which I was obliged to come to, concerning the quality of her temper, was final.

I owned that it was execrable, for I found that it gave way, on the smallest occasion of dissent to her wishes or her opinions. Whenever I ventured to complain, I soon repented—did I remonstrate in strains such as this—My eyes! this rice is too much boiled;—*paf*, I received a slap on the cheek. My soul, you have put too much paint on your eyes! oh me, a clutch at my beard! My lamb, sit more that way—five fingers into my face.

Such were the first pages of the history of my married life—such the first beginnings of what is called the blessed state of matrimony. I bore all with patience, hoping that as years advanced we should better understand each other, as a short legged man bestriding a fat steed, in the course of time fits the curvature of his legs to the rotundity of the horse's body; but no—her smaller infirmities expanded into extensive vices.

Her beauty, which was unimpaired, and which in truth was dazzling, whilst it kept me in constant admiration, at the same time drove me into a current of jealousy and apprehension, for it became evident, from several indications, that she was determined to carry it to a much higher market than to that of the miserable wretch upon whom she had first bestowed it.

She had succeeded in acquiring great ascendancy in the harem of my father, having fascination at command, for with the same powers she had exercised to enslave me, she could attach others, although with different motives. My father was her devoted slave, so was my

mother, as well as the other women. Little by little she so entirely ingratiated herself that there was no intrigue to which she was not privy, and, indeed, in which she did not shine as a leading character. She was not long in carrying all her own father's wishes, and had the satisfaction to see his rival by the Shah's own command delivered over into his hands, to be treated according as it should seem best to his tender mercies. Soon after she acquired a footing in the royal harem, and there she followed up her machinations with a vigour which made me tremble, for I was conscious of the power of her beauty, and were she to exercise it upon the Shah himself, which I knew was her object, I felt that the consequences might be fatal to my happiness. I might, indeed, have asserted the husband in my own harem and used force to prevent her leaving it, but what man was ever a match for a woman in cunning? I was not sufficiently excited with rage to administer poison—but such an alternative more than once occupied my mind, as most likely it had occupied hers, for she was wariness itself in all that passed

through her lips. At length what I so much dreaded came to pass. The Shah did see her —and alas! he saw her with the eyes and feelings that I so much apprehended. She soon informed me of this in triumph, the tigress! when worked up into a paroxysm of fury and jealousy, I could contain my anger no longer, I seized her by the tresses of her hair, and taking up my slipper, administered so severe a dose of beating, that she lay down apparently in lifeless agony. But this was only a feint, for no sooner had I quitted the room than she arose, and putting on her veil, straightway betook herself to the royal palace. I never saw her more in my own house, and from that time to this I have been an object of the most cruel persecution, hunted out from one corner to another until you see the sad result. Very soon after the commencement of our dissensions, my family began to feel the effect of her intrigues, for her wicked father soon brought on the ruin of mine, and before a year had elapsed, he had supplanted his benefactor in the Shah's good graces. As for me, everything that I

possessed was scattered to the four winds of heaven.

Under one pretext or another, I was constantly accused of crimes of which I was as innocent as a babe. I was bastinadoed for other people's thefts, beat on the mouth for other people's lies, tortured for fictitious heresies, and exiled for imaginary treason. I have been now an almost houseless wanderer for the last twenty years;—wherever I appear, I am known as the hopeless old man. As often as I attempt to raise myself in life, either by my own exertions or by the help of friends, so often am I found out and ruined. I have suffered every vicissitude, and tasted of every sort of misfortune, until I am now become a callous old beggar;—I should not be surprized at this very moment, now that I am enjoying the luxury of this shaded arch, and the advantage of some one to listen to my tale of woe, that something will occur to dash even this glimpse of enjoyment with bitterness.

And in truth, the old man had scarcely said this, before the sounds of mules and horses' foot-

steps were heard to pass over the bridge, accompanied by the cries of muleteers and other officers, altogether indicating the passage of a large cavalcade. As it wound into the road, Cossim and his companion remarked that it consisted of a takhteravan, or litter, richly decorated, surrounded by women on horseback, and preceded by eunuchs clearing the road.

They were evidently women belonging to the court. Of a sudden the takhteravan stopt, the doors of it were thrown open, and a woman of masculine and commanding appearance was seen within, who, in a loud querulous voice, pointing to the spot where Cossim and the old man sat, gave orders to the eunuchs to proceed thither. Without noticing Cossim, the old man was seized, and almost before he could utter a word, his feet were thrown into the air, and blows administered thereupon, as fast as four stout men could bestow them.

"Go, dog! till the end of time it will be thus!" exclaimed the fury, and there leaving the

poor wretch, groaning and writhing with pain, she ordered the cavalcade to proceed, and straightway disappeared.

Cossim immediately went to the old man's relief, who, amidst the heavings of his pain, exclaimed :

"Did you see? That is my wife—did I not say true that I am a hopeless old man?"

Cossim endeavoured to console him, and offered his services to bear him to some place of shelter; but he exclaimed :

"No—leave me here—this has often happened. I suppose I am, in truth, the scapegoat of destiny. When it has nothing else to torment, it comes to me. So be it—praise be to Allah for all things. Let us hope that in the next world, I may live, and she grill. Leave me—leave me. I have had more enjoyment to-day through your means, than I have had for years—Allah take you into his keeping."

Cossim walked away according to the old man's desire. He willingly would have staid to alleviate his suffering, although he was himself

in a hapless condition. The story sunk deep in his thoughts, for he too, in his earliest youth, had lived in a state of great delusion concerning the merits of womankind. 'Tis true he had not then seen the beautiful vision of the garden, but still is not every vain imagination a vision like that which had visited Cossim? He felt a chock to the expectations he had been cherishing, when he reflected upon the result to the passion which at first had engaged the old man's heart, and he argued thus with himself—"Might not this happen also to me?" But still the charming vision had taken too powerful a possession of his heart to permit him to discard it, therefore he continued to hope that the being in real life, of whom it was the prototype, would still be his.

He bent his steps towards the cemetery, on the banks of the Zainderood, determining to take up his quarters for the night in one of its many tombs. Day was drawing to a close, and the moon, in soothing stillness, rising behind the adjacent mountain,

gradually diffused its soft gleams over the landscape. Cossim walked on deep in thought, unmindful of surrounding objects, and slowly approached the most conspicuous monument, which having reached, to his surprize, he perceived something move. Immediately his heart beat with a quicker pulse, so much was he preoccupied with the expectation of a vision. What he beheld, however, was anything but supernatural. It was a second old man, who was seated quietly upon a tomb-stone close to the mausoleum, and who arose when he perceived Cossim. He was a venerable-looking personage, with a beard flowing to his girdle, and exhibited in his dress the appearance of a well-conditioned man of substance. Cossim accosted him with the usual salutation of peace, which was returned by the stranger without the least emotion, and after the first compliments had passed, they sat down together on a tomb.

"You are come out late," said the old man—"sun-set has long been called from the mosque."

"I am," said Cossim; "the night is the

best time for such as I. I come to seek a refuge till the morning."

"You could not have sought a better than the tomb of Babarouk," said the other; "he was a wonderful Mollah."

"Was he?" said Cossim. "I care not whose tomb it is; I only want a roof over my head."

"Are you a Mussulman," said the stranger, "and know not who Babarouk was? He was a wonderful person, Babarouk. I too want a place of rest—but not for one night only—I want mine for ever."

"What words are these?" said Cossim, fearful lest he had met one seeking some dire extremity. "Do you wish to rid yourself of life?"

"This world is a bad world," said the old man; "but Babarouk is a good Mollah. I desire to go to heaven, if I can find a place of burial hereabouts for myself. See how many are buried here, who have sought the same advantage. I am weary of this life, but I want to be sure of a better."

"How is this?" inquired Cossim, strangely puzzled at the stranger's words.

"Thus it is," said the other—"at the last day, when Babarouk ascends to heaven, he will be sure to take me and this company here around, with him, if we can but lay hold of his skirts."

"And why, in the name of Allah," said Cossim, "do you wish to leave this world? you appear to be a man of substance, a man of accomplishment—one on good terms with fortune, not a poor wretch like me."

"*Ahi!* appearances are deceitful," said the stranger, "I may look all you say, but in fact, my soul is withered, and my liver dried up. I may still be an unhappy man, although my beard be well died, and a cashmere shawl be round my waist;—what words are these? And notwithstanding you seem to want proper clothing, and seek your bed in a tomb, still you may be the happier man of the two."

"As for me," said Cossim, "in point of worldly circumstances, a dog is better off; but thanks be to Allah, my mind is without

fear, and in full confidence I can exclaim, whatever is, so be it. But why are you without soundness of brain?"

"*Behey!*" exclaimed the stranger—"the story is a long one. A man without a home, for such I suppose you are, cannot comprehend the miseries endured by him who possesses a house mounted upon its fullest compliment. In two words let me tell you—I am dying of having four wives and being too much loved—that is my history."

"Marvellous!" said Cossim; "can a man be too much loved? I wonder how that can ever be? I have just seen a poor wretch who is the victim of too much hate; but how a misfortune can be created out of too much love I am still to laern. Do favour me by telling me your history. It will be long before the moon goes down, and you have plenty of time to satisfy my curiosity."

"There is no harm in what you require," said the old man. "I would willingly desert my home for ever, so much do I abhor returning thither."

He accordingly began as follows:

STORY OF THE SECOND OLD MAN, WHO WAS TOO MUCH LOVED.

My father was one of the richest merchants in Ispahan. He accumulated wealth during a long life, having traded successfully with India, Cashmere, Turkey, and Muscovy, and it was only late in life that he thought of solacing himself with a wife. I was the only child he ever possessed, and he died almost immediately after the celebration of my fifteenth birth-day. He had been so discreet a possessor of wealth, that no one, in fact, knew the extent of his possessions, excepting an Abyssinian slave, in whom he entirely confided; and this circumstance prevented the Shah and his officers taking cognizance of his death, allowing me to enter into possession of my inheritance without

those acts of extortion usual on such occasions. The faithful negro, persisting in the same guarded conduct which had guided his master, allowed the secret of which he was the depositary, to remain undivulged until I had reached an age when I might direct my own affairs, and then only he informed me of the amount of my wealth. Placing at my disposal innumerable sacks of money, besides a great accumulation of jewels, all of which had been buried in the earth, he kissed my feet, and avowed that he was as much my slave as he had been my father's.

I was in the seventh heaven, and looked upon myself as the special favourite of fortune, for in addition to such advantages, I was a very handsome youth, so handsome that I was known by no other name than the handsome Hussein. I was well skilled in horsemanship, and so excellent a shot, that I could kill an antelope full gallop, from off my saddle; then I wrote a fine hand, made verses as well as Hafiz, and spoke like a professor of Arabic. So accomplished, so handsome, and so rich a man, could not fail

being much noticed, and accordingly I was universally courted, and when people saw me, they cried out *bah! bah! bah!* My mother, who had lived quietly in our old family house, in the style of a common merchant's wife, was quite surprized when she heard of the wealth to which I was heir; and as soon as this circumstance was known in the city, you may be certain that she was very soon beset by proposals of marriage for me. Khans and Mirzas, who before this intelligence was known, would scarcely have smoked from the same kalian as my father, now came and visited me, making professions of friendship, and it was soon intimated from high authority, that I had only to speak, and I should be invested with some post of honour and authority at court. I will not say how I behaved on this occasion, for, perhaps, I might blush for having indulged in much vanity and in no little presumption.

With one hand on my money-bags, and with the other holding a looking-glass to my face, thus feeling that I was both richer and hand-

somer than other men, I determined to be courted for myself alone, and resolved to make a figure in the country. I sought the finest horses, wherewith to stock my stables, ordered gold-enamelled pipe-heads, silver ewers and basins, golden trays and inlaid drinking-cups. My wardrobe was composed of the finest stuffs and furs, and I seriously began to think of securing a wife, as preparatory to an accumulation of wives, and all the grandeur and circumstance of a magnificent harem.

My faithful negro slave, who had witnessed the labour, the anxiety, and the thrift with which my poor father had collected his wealth, groaning when he perceived how easily it vanished from under my hands, was glad to hear me talk of a wife, for he deemed marriage a sober act. He wished to see me united to the daughter of some rich and careful trader, who being aware of the value of money, might look with circumspection after my property; but I was bent upon making a great alliance, and it was not long before I secured to myself the

daughter of the Shah's principal master of the ceremonies, a great Seffevean lord, and one of considerable influence at court.

A magnificent entertainment was given on the occasion, in which I displayed such dazzling wealth, that every one exclaimed that the days of Hatem Tai were restored. I was so handsome myself, that I scarcely took notice of the lady who was brought to me as my wife; and as I was quite certain that she could not abstain from loving me to distraction, I did not take much trouble to discover what might be the nature of her disposition or her temper. However, although she did love me in a manner that no man was ever loved before, still there were parts of her conduct which might as well have been omitted.

During our moments of domestic intercourse, she would insist upon my adhering more strictly than I was wont to do, to the forms of etiquette, of which her noble father was the professor, and of which she avowed herself to be the complete mistress; and she required that I, as the least noble of the two, should

submit to the humiliation of standing before her until she should order me to sit. To this I refused, asserting that having selected her out of hundreds who solicited my hand, that all the riches being on my side, and that I, being the handsomest man at court, it was absurd in her to put forward pretensions so utterly untenable. Upon this subject we were always at variance, and although she would avow her love in a manner which convinced me, that adherence to etiquette was only a consequence of her defective education, and did not essentially destroy her devotion to my person, still it was repugnant to my feelings every day to hear that I was meanly born, and, therefore, in the course of a short time, I determined upon taking to myself a second wife, before whom I might sit or stand just as it should seem best to myself, and who would love me entirely for the beauty of my person, my excellence and accomplishments.

Preserving the greatest secrecy towards my first wife, I soon succeeded in obtaining a second, the daughter of a merchant, recom-

mended to me by my faithful negro, who still enjoyed my confidence whenever his services were necessary. This was a tender creature, apparently of the most pliant, docile, and caressing temper. She really did love me—she told me so a thousand times a day. She watched over all my interests with the fidelity and vigilance of a house-dog—superintended my food and made my sweet-meats, and devoted herself so earnestly to embroidering my scull-caps, that I really thought no man was ever so much beloved. In her society, I entirely forgot my first wife, whom I left in full enjoyment of her etiquettes, and who I hoped would feel how foolishly she had acted in rendering me the victim of her ceremonious tastes.

But I had ill calculated upon her forbearance, for when she heard of the arrival of the intruder, passions arose of which I could scarcely believe the existence, particularly when I was convinced that, happen what might, I should still be intensely beloved. The daughter of the master of ceremonies no sooner heard of the arrival of the daughter of the merchant as a

co-wife and co-aspirer to my affections, than she beset my path with every possible annoyance, and having at length succeeded in making me stand before her, forgetful of every etiquette, and in contempt of all decorum, she flung herself upon me, and what with clutches at my beard, blows from her slipper, and expectorations on my face, she made me doubtful of the extent of that love with which I thought to have inspired her.

She then proceeded to the apartment of my new wife, and there she again shewed much contempt for etiquette, by breaking whatever came in her way, kalians, water-basins, drinking-cups, until she was arrested in her career by the demeanour of her rival, who, throwing off that pliant, docile, and caressing temper which had so much enslaved me, shewed herself to the full as pugnacious as her rival. I know not what might have been the result had these furies been left to themselves, but their respective women having come to a rescue, they drew them off each to their respective apart-

ments, whilst I was left to myself like a rose torn to pieces by a pair of enraged *bulbuls*.

Thus situated, I began to consider what ought to be done. To face my first wife in her present state of excitement, was out of the question—it required the courage of a lion so to do; therefore, I had recourse to my second, of whose love I felt secure, although I discovered that she too, was not the lamb I had at first taken her to be. I found her seated, 'tis true, embroidering a scull-cap, but new passions had arisen in her breast, and instead of devotion to me, she now breathed nothing but vengeance against her enemy.

"Allah! Allah!" she exclaimed, "what ashes are fallen upon our heads? You will not be counted amongst men if you allow such things to take place in your house—I, poor shameface that I am, here I was seated, without thought, embroidering, when, by your soul, the woman came in with the noise of thunder, and without saying peace be with you! in an instant began to break everything that came

under her hand. Although my heart be humble, yet, after all, I am a woman and a living creature—I stood up and with that tongue which God has given me I said, You, who are you?"

"'I, who am I!' said she, 'I will tell you who I am—I am not the daughter of a worn out shop-keeper—I am not a miserable second-hand wife—I am somebody—my father is some one—the King himself knows me—I will not be fobbed off with a husband who loves some one else. What business have you here, you low-bred, ill-born, buying and selling creature?'

"What business have I here?" said I; "as much as you—I am your equal—I am the wife of the handsome Hussein."

"'Are you?' said she. 'Take that!' upon which she opened her fingers, and struck me with her open hand. I could not do less, and as Allah is great, I became a lioness, and I did things. Now, if you love me, you must do something too. Man, after all, is man; and should you allow such violence to take place without retorting it, who knows what may happen?"

I endeavoured to suppress her violence

and to recall her thoughts to her domestic duties; but I did not succeed, for her former pacific nature seemed entirely to have changed, and she only breathed hostility. She insisted upon my performing some desperate act of violence upon my first wife. Poisoning was too good—bastinado too mild; she required nothing less than stifling; in short, she demanded the death of her rival. At such a request, my heart turned back upon itself, for the offender belonged to a powerful family; her father possessed the ear of the Shah and his ministers; and too happy would they have been, to acquire a good pretext for levying heavy fines upon me, or, perhaps, totally despoiling me of my fortune.

I, therefore, was slow in agreeing to the solicitations of the merchant's daughter and became puzzled what to do. Her love for me was now entirely swallowed up in her hatred for her enemy, and I began to fear that neither my beauty nor my riches would ever bring it back again.

I allowed things to take their course for

some time, during which I led a life of incessant trouble. I became less than a dog. I felt that I ought to be loved, for in my person I possessed all that was requisite; but the love that was my due was swallowed up in hatred.

In this state of uncertainty, I was roused by a message from the grand vizier, that his Majesty the Shah, in consequence of the station which I held in the world, and of the great esteem in which he held me, had deigned to bestow upon me one of the ladies of his harem, and I was ordered immediately to take her to wife. What shall I say? At this piece of intelligence my heart swelled to suffocation, and putting my forefinger into my mouth, I exclaimed, "Allah, there is but one Allah! Refuge in God! how much more am I destined to be beloved? Women come upon me thicker than caterpillars—pity, pity! Oh, those women—those women!"

However, there was no help for my situation. I was obliged to obey, or lose my head; and whether I would or not, I exclaimed: "Upon my eyes be it! Whatever be the com-

mands of the centre of the Universe, they are a law to his slave!"

After some reflection, it occurred to me, that as there are always two sides of a question, it might turn out that this new event might have its bright side as well as its dark. My home could not be more ruined than it was; and perhaps this King's wife, by her presence, might subdue the wild passions of the two other women.

And so, indeed, it turned out. The disputants, upon hearing the new event, ceased hostilities. The name of a King's Banou awed them into respect, and for a while I enjoyed some rest, although I perceived that I should have much to endure from the airs which this lady gave herself upon her arrival.

Although she had long passed the years of youth, yet she behaved as if she and the roses had the world in common together. When she came to me, she still smarted under the mortification of having been dismissed from sitting under the shade of the royal eyebrow, therefore her temper was not like sugar. Al-

though my house was as magnificent as a house could be, and the apartments allotted to her quite unexceptionable, yet she did nothing but remind me of the luxuries she had left, and of the honour which she did me, of putting up with my abominations.

I bore all with great patience, and was thankful to Allah, that, through her means, I enjoyed some respite from the storms of fury which I had before endured, when, for my ill-luck, all at once the Banou, as she was called, took to loving me. She made the most violent demonstrations, and showed her love in so many tormenting ways, that I began to bewail the destiny which had made me the handsomest of men. Her jealousy rose to such frantic excess, that she never allowed me to be out of her sight for a moment; and when I ventured to bend my steps towards the apartments of either my first, or my second wife, she was ready to run wild with rage and despair.

I led this sort of life for a considerable time. My harem was celebrated for being the most

litigious and noisy in the city; and I was noted for being the most beloved, as well as the most miserable of mortals.

As I receded from youth, and old age approached, I determined to try my chance once more, whether I could not meet with some good creature, who would devote her life to make mine happy. Instead of seeking one who belonged to a family of consequence, I instituted a search among the daughters of country people, and soon secured a damsel from one of the wandering tribes, with the chief of whom I had some dealings. For this purpose, I made a pretext to perform a journey into the southern parts of Persia, and there the ceremony was performed.

I passed some months with my new wife, in perfect happiness and tranquillity; and would have stayed away for ever, from my quarrelsome harem, had I been able. But pressing affairs drew me thither, and putting a bold face upon my late achievement, I returned to Ispahan with my plebeian wife.

Allah! Allah! as soon as it was known

that a fourth* was to be added to the harem, the news acted like a shell falling into the centre of a powder magazine. Each of my three first wives received me with open claws, and unloosed tongues. As for the poor innocent cause of their rage, I verily believe that three different potions of poison were prepared for her on the very night of her arrival; and had it not been for her own sagacity, which warned her of the danger, she could not have lived an hour after she had entered the walls of my house.

I am now entirely hopeless of ever passing a quiet moment again in this life. It is only this very day, upon returning home after my visit to the King's gate, that news was brought to me, that, after a long series of attempts, which had been warded off by the skill and sagacity of the parties, my first wife had succeeded in poisoning my second wife; and my second wife, strange to say, had seized, also, that very moment to poison my first wife; and there they both lie, in their

* Four wives are allowed by the laws of Mohammed.

respective apartments in the agonies of death. Such a scene of wailing and lamentation as is now taking place, was never before witnessed; and I have retreated from it in order to obtain a few hours' quiet, and meditate on what I hope may soon be my lot to endure, namely, a speedy departure from this world of care. I seek a spot where I may rest in peace, and stand a chance of going to heaven, whenever the Saint who reposes here shall ascend thither.

The old man having ceased to speak, a long silence ensued. Cossim was seriously impressed with what he heard; his beautiful vision was contemplated with different feelings; and he secretly breathed this question to himself: "Can it be possible that all women are alike?" He dwelt long and painfully upon this thought, until he was startled by the voice of his companion, who said:

"Come, come with me to my house. You shall sleep there instead of this place. We will sup together. My dwelling is at hand, and you shall, in some manner, judge for yourself of the truth of what I have related."

Cossim mechanically followed him, and, after walking some distance, they reached a handsome entrance, through which they passed into a large court-yard, laid out in flower-beds, and fountains; but instead of the usual quiet of a Mussulman's residence, the sounds of women's shrieks and lamentations struck his ears, mingled with voices that seemed to express upbraidings and anger.

"Those are my wives," said the old man, shrugging up his shoulders. "They are a degree less violent to-night than ordinary. We may, perhaps, get some supper in comparative peace."

Cossim followed him into a room, handsomely furnished with fine carpets; and after they had sat some time, a train of servants brought in trays, with a good supper, followed by kalians and coffee.

But all the entertainments in the world could not arouse the drooping spirits of the youth, who, in the odious cries which assailed his ears, contemplated what his own fate might be. He said nothing, but bewailing the situation of

his host, determined, the first moment he could do so with propriety, to escape from so utterly hateful and unattractive a roof.

The supper being over, he was conducted to a chamber, where he lay down with the intention of sleeping; but he could not—sleep fled his eyelids. He could think of nothing but the stories he had recently heard, each confirming the other, and leading him to fear that women and misery were synonymous terms.

Ere the day had dawned, he arose, washed himself, and having said his morning prayer, he bade adieu to his friend, and bent his steps towards the mountains, not knowing precisely which road to take. Undesignedly, he fell into the path which led to that part of the range where he had performed his first act of penance. As he proceeded onwards, coming to a sharp angle of rock, suddenly, at some little distance, he perceived a female form gliding on before him. To his breathless surprize, it proved the very same bewitching form he had seen when he lay extended in the

garden of Irem; and, although but a moment before he had come to the resolution never to risk his happiness by dealings with woman-kind, yet no resolution was proof against the fascination before him. He hurried on, in the hope of overtaking her; but the faster he walked, the faster she preceded him, until, at length, after much toil, he succeeded in reaching the very spot he had formerly occupied.

He now concluded that he should certainly obtain an interview, for he perceived that she had entered the cavern, having caught a glimpse of her white robe, as she turned into its first winding. He hastily ran thither, when, to his utter surprize, the figure turned sharply round, and disclosed to his longing eyes, not the beautiful face and endearing expression of the lovely vision which had so long filled his thoughts, but the very old woman, jin or peri who had received him in the cavern, in Arabia. As soon as he perceived her, he fell at her feet, and exclaimed:

"I am your slave!—deal with me as it seems

best to you, but explain the mysteries which have beguiled me. Where is the lovely form that I have been following?"

"Cossim," exclaimed the old woman, in a voice full of sweetness and encouragement, "open your eyes and give ear to my words. You have lived hitherto in a state of illusion —break the spell. That figure was a deception—the truth you see in me; learn then to observe the things of the world in their proper light—dare to see the truth —the nearer you can approach to it, the greater will be your happiness. Let this be the last lesson you will receive, and instead of groping in a mist, you will for the future live in sunshine. Go and prosper—the world is before you."

With these words she disappeared, and Cossim was again left to himself, but so renewed in mind and vigour, that it appeared to him he had just awoke from a dream. He straightway bent his steps to the city, and ere he had reached the suburbs, he was met by two men who accosting him, invited him

to sit and refresh himself, and to whom he related the whole of his strange adventures. This encounter was the cause of his future prosperity. It was the Shah himself in disguise to whom he had disclosed his story, and who, being struck by his manner and the extraordinary things he had related, took him into favour. He soon became a man of consequence; his abilities shone forth in every thing he did, for this simple reason, that he saw things in their proper light—above all, in the conduct of his own affairs; he took care in marriage to select a wife principally for her good qualities, and moreover, never to marry more than one at a time.

Here my friend ceased to speak, and we soon entered into conversation upon the story he had related. I approved of it, for more reasons than one, and recommended him strongly to relate it to the Shah, having observed that it ended in a compliment as well as a hint, that Kings ought to seize every

opportunity of seeking and rewarding merit. To this he fully agreed. But what I more particularly remarked, was, that this story partook, in fact, from beginning to end, more of the parable, than of a common tale of mere amusement. "Yes," said the Mirza, "true you have observed, we men of Persia are apt to express ourselves in parables. The Shah often exercises his wit in them, although, in truth, if he cannot speak plain, what man in his dominions can? Our wise men deeming it unworthy to express themselves like people in the bazaar, are ever racking their brains for a happy similitude—and, indeed, why undergo the labour we do to learn our poets by heart or to write poetry ourselves, but that in our common discourse we may illustrate our ideas by quotations and happy allusions?"

"Then let me ask," said I, "what gave rise in your mind to the story just related? There is nothing in it to excite either strong emotion, or great interest. You must have had some ulterior object in view."

"You do not say wrong," said the Mirza.

" Your slave had an object in view, and the occasion which gave rise to it is as follows: The day before his Majesty began his course of spring medicines, he called together an assembly of his principal wise men, his physician-in-chief, his head Mollah, a Suffi-doctor, his head astrologer, and one or two others who study science and court wisdom, and he was pleased also to superadd your humble servant. The discourse fell upon the nature of man, his attributes, his power of bringing himself to perfection, and upon the gradations of intellect and physical advantages that exist in men in general. The flatterers soon made it their principal object to shew that the infinite variety of qualities which exist in men, are imperceptibly graduated by various degrees of perfection until they reach their highest point, namely, Kings, beyond which any further degree of perfectibility they asserted is hopeless. " ' See the negro,' said the physician; ' he is the lowest in the scale of beings, (excepting perhaps the Jew, interrupted the Mollah) his intellect is more like that of a beast than anything in the shape of man;—it is doubtful whether he

has a soul—he scarcely observes any of the decencies of nature; he is, therefore, born the slave to all Mahomedans; his black hide is made on purpose to receive their stripes; we prepare him in preference to other animals, to be the guardian of our women, and although he be generally strong in person, yet such strength is useless, until we teach him how to wield it. Then see the broken Hindoo—the poor wretch from India—behold his small frame, his women's bones, his pusillanimous spirit—what can he do in the scale of creation? His intellect is sharper than the negro's although his colour is the same; he reads, and writes, and casts accounts—he works well in gold and makes fine stuffs, but as a man, he is little better than a woman.'

"'But do you say nothing of Jews?' again remarked the Mollah, 'the most unclean of the human race.'

"'True,' said the doctor, 'but they have a law, a written law, and degraded though they be, they have Abraham and Moses for their ancestors. They are, 'tis true, in the scale of God's creatures, the lowest of white beings;

they are the leprosy of creation. They are a degree above dogs. We kill a Jew, and say no blood is spilt. They are the abandoned of Allah. Who cares for a Jew more or less? If we want money, we send a Jew to earn it, to steal or cheat, and then we take it from him—that is all they are good for; but they have intellect—that we must allow them, perverted though it be; therefore they must class before negroes and Hindoos.'

"'But what say you of Franks?' remarked the Suffi doctor. 'Franks have intellect over and above. See, wherefore do they come to Persia?—they know where to seek countries better than their own. Ah, the unsainted dogs, they know where the sun shines, they can find that out, they themselves being the slaves of darkness—livers in clouds, and children of smoke.'

"'The whole family of Franks are unclean,' said the physician, shaking the lappel of his cloak and blowing over each shoulder. '*Ahi!* the unclean progeny! Allah Allah! whither shall we run from their contaminations? They drink wine, and say praise be to Allah;—they

eat of swine, the filthy beast, and dancing about for joy, exclaim—good! good! and hug each other in full greediness. They never wash the right hand, bath or no bath is all the same to them, they are ignorant of ablution; their women shew their faces to all who choose to gaze, and leer, and look; whilst they reside in the same apartment with strange men, wear straw mats on their heads, and rub their teeth and mouths with the hair of swine and other unclean beasts. They are a nation without Allah, are never seen praying; or if they have priests, their priests eat abomination, gaze at women, and, it is said, dance like the others. O the unblessed generation! They are a shade above Jews, for, in truth, nobody can deny they are men, and strong, and live by fighting; but they are, perhaps, the furthest removed from perfection of any of God's creation.'

"'Excepting the Moscoves,' said the Suffi, 'who are still further removed, and are a degree lower in the scale than the Franks.'

"'True you say,' said the doctor. 'Allah Allah! can those white heads, with faces like

sculls, eyes of the wild hog, and odour of the hyæna, be classed among human beings?'

"'There is one thing,' said his Majesty, who, wrapped up in a heavy fur pelisse, (being his sick costume,) had listened to the discussions of his wise men, 'there is one thing you have forgotten. You say that Franks and Moscoves are men and human creatures; but one of the attributes common to all mortals, they have not—I mean fear—they have no fear;—they advance in spite of every thing, invading, seizing, taking possession without fear. They attack a whole nation—recollect what is a whole nation—they, a handful of men, they come from their own countries, which are situated Allah knows where, to attack a new and a whole nation, and what is more, take it and make it part of their own. Now these cannot be men; they are either more or less than men. We, Persians, who are the most perfect of the species, the privileged of Allah, we have never done anything of the kind; we know what fear is—it is an attribute of man, and a very wholesome one

too; we never think of appropriating a whole nation, like these Franks.'

"'As I am your slave,' said the astrologer in chief, 'whatever the Asylum of the Universe has commanded, is true. The words of Majesty are words of wisdom. Whose dog was Aflatoon, compared to our King of Kings, and may Noushirvan be humbled to the dust before our Centre of the World; but your slave begs leave to represent, that the want of perfection in Franks, and, indeed, in all men who are not Persians, is their incredulity in regard to astrology. One hour with them is as good as another. What care they for the stars, the low-born! They are totally insensible to what the planets may be about, and will as soon attack a kingdom, without the permission of an astrologer, as they would eat a water melon. Can such beings be classed among men? Happy Persia! that possesses wise men among her children, who can guide her people to act according to rule; to eat, drink, sleep, take journeys, medicine, and wives, according as the planets above may ordain, and above all possesses a King—a King of Kings, whose

wisdom is so pre-eminent, that he knows how to cherish wisdom and its professors, and adopt its ordinances, thus becoming a shining example to his subjects.'

"'*Bah! bah! bah!*' we all exclaimed, upon hearing these words, and we perceived that the Shah was pleased.

"'But Turks! What shall we say of Turks?' exclaimed the man of many drugs, taking up the thread of his discourse. 'They take the precedence of Franks, according to our most approved theories. They acknowledge the holy prophet, they worship one Allah, and are true believers. They only eat dirt in some few particulars, and that they do most plentifully.'

"'Curse Omar! Curse those who approve of Omar. Maledictions on all Turks!' was slowly growled forth by all the assembly present.

"'Yes, they are allowed a place among men, infidels though they be to the orthodox faith. Their beards are only fit for brooms to our dust-holes. Their *shalwars*,* are only bags to carry filth in; but still they class above

* Large trousers.

Franks, and joy go with them, for they are beasts of beasts.'

"When we had well expended our national animosities against the Turks, the doctor then broke out into rapturous exclamations in favour of ourselves—*we*, the Persians. Looking towards the Shah, as seeking the approbation of his countenance, he said,

"'If wit and intellect be required, where are they to be found if not in Persia? What country ever possessed such poets, such historians, such philosophers? Seek you beauty of person, what men are like the men of Iran? Seek you for sagacity as statesmen, see what a station Persia holds in the world! Do you want every quality combined, wit, beauty, sagacity, and valour, look to our own King of Kings!'

"Upon this, there was a general exclamation of approbation, and we lauded the Shah until he stopped us in his wisdom, by saying, *bus, bus*, enough, enough, and then spoke as follows, addressing his physician-in-chief:

"'You have spoken long and well; but still, considering the advantages that Persia really possesses over all the nations of the world, you have not convinced me that life at best, in its most

brilliant colours and under its most favourable aspect, is worth the possession beyond the period of youth and enjoyment. Its pleasures are short, its miseries numerous. I, who have enjoyed a long reign, who have possessed all that the heart of man or King could desire, am quite of the same opinion as the famous Jemsheed, the founder of our monarchy, who, in answer to a flatterer, said,

> King tho' I am, yet evil are my days ;
> The largest torch creates the largest blaze.
> Of what is life composed that's worth the thinking?
> What care I for the land, if I be sinking ?

"It was upon these words, which fell from his Majesty," addded my friend, the Mirza, "that I founded the story which I have just related, for I wished to shew that life, in order to be bearable, must have its vicissitudes; like the sea, if not disturbed and agitated by storms, would become stagnant and putrify."

I congratulated him upon his success, but at the same time said, I could not do the same to his countrymen, upon the knowledge which they had displayed of Europeans and

Franks in general. He laughed, and exclaimed,

"Double dotted asses! In giving you a specimen of conversation among ourselves, I have informed you of the extent of their knowledge. Such we are, boasters! Ignorance and pride, ever go together. Tell them of a useful invention, making of cloth for instance, they reject it and say, 'Our fathers did without it, and, therefore, why should we require it?' Then say after this what hope is there for such a people?"

My friend was, indeed, an enlightened man, compared to the mass of his countrymen. But how could he rear his solitary voice against despotism fed by ignorance and still hope to produce effect? We parted with a renewal of friendly expressions.

VISIT VII.

SINCE my last visit to the Mirza, his Majesty the Shah had quitted his palace at Tehran, and transferred himself and his court, with a detachment of his harem to Sultanieh. On a mound conspicuous in the vast plain, stands a small summer palace, consisting of a large hall supported by pillars, and a set of chambers, appropriated to the ladies' and to the King's retiring apartments. Surrounding the mound was spread, far as the eye could reach, the royal camp, in which was collected an army, efficient in its various departments, but only intended as a precautionary demonstration, being a force indicative of the power of Persia, which, like a sword in its scabbard hanging upon the war-

rior's thigh, was known to be ready for service, though its power was dormant and its sharpness hidden. Immediately adjacent to the palace, were the pavilions of the viziers, courtiers, and the great officers of state, among which was that of my friend.

Having followed the embassy of which I was a member, to the camp, after fulfilling the visits of ceremony to the Shah and his ministers, I immediately sought the Mirza in his abode, and found him more engrossed by poetry and the pleasures of imagination than ever. We both agreed that nothing can be more invigorating to the mind, renewing its faculties, and refreshing to its energies, than being transferred from the walls of a house and a city to the expanse of the open country, where hill and plain, rock and verdure, sterility and vegetation, are spread abroad for reflection and meditation. My friend's mind broke forth into rapturous poetry; and, although I am no enemy to the muses, yet, in good truth, I must own it required a great effort of friendship to restrain myself from longing that his effusions might be of shorter duration. Having, how-

ever, allowed him all the self-denial that I could spare, I gradually brought him to matter of fact, and he informed me that, after permitting his thoughts to soar into the sublimities of poetry, he found it difficult to descend to the composition of a tale of real life. Extending his hand towards me with animation, his eye at the same time "in a fine frenzy rolling," he exclaimed:

"Is it not an important proof of the progress of the mind towards perfection, this impatience at the pressure of worldly matters, when it longs to be left entirely to the enjoyment of things spiritual?"

He then exclaimed:

"My friend, hear these lines:

That veil which screens yon female form and mien,
Tells me that charms are hid—and wherefore hide?
But greater far the charm—the bliss how keen,
When from my soul this veil of flesh shall glide."

I must own I could not help contemplating this man of genius with some commiseration, and deploring that he belonged to an Asiatic community rather than to ours, where he

would have been better appreciated, and where his genius, unshackled by the terrors of despotism, would have acquired an unlimited range over the regions of imagination, enlightened by education, and set at ease by liberty ; still I could not refrain from expressing my admiration of his powers. He then told me, that on the journey from Tehran to Sultanieh, the Shah had not once called upon him to keep him awake, but that he expected shortly to be invited to amuse him, for the chase had not been prosperous, game not being plentiful this year in the environs of Sultanieh ;—his Majesty, moreover, was beginning to exhibit symptoms of old age and love of tranquil pleasures. The Mirza informed me, that he had, at present, expended all his invention in submitting to the fascinations of poetry, and therefore, had had recourse to a book of Turkish tales, which the secretary of the ambassador from the Porte had lent him, and from which he had extracted materials for a narrative which he intended, next time he was called upon, to submit to his Majesty.

"It is a story," said he, "which, perhaps,

may act beneficially upon his Majesty's pursuits, which, to say the truth, are too much absorbed by his love of the fair sex, for it relates the adventures of one of the worst of that species, and may, perhaps, tend to act as a corrective."

"Ah," said I, "the subject is a curious one; in the name of Allah, let us hear."

"Sit," said he, "extend your legs—no ceremony—give ear, and if you love me, tell me whether you think I may venture to be so bold."

Upon which he spoke as follows:

HISTORY OF YELDEZ, THE INEVITABLE.

There was once a young man of the name of Selim, one of the true faith, who lived at Scutari, a town on the sea-coast, directly opposite to the palace of the blood-drinker, the emperor of Constantinople. He was the only child of a negress, who had been the slave of a rich Turk,

a merchant, who being a benevolent man, had bequeathed her liberty at his death, on account of her fidelity to him, and had left her sufficient money to enable her to pass the rest of her days out of the reach of want.

Selim was a youth full of good qualities; he was very careful of his mother, and laboured hard to make her comfortable. His complexion denoted his origin, for although his father was a fair Turk, yet destiny played him false in making him quite dark, and by way of stamping him an undoubted son of Ethiopia, had covered his head with wool instead of hair. The very small house inhabited by his mother being close to the sea, Selim had early imbibed a taste for nautical pursuits, and having been allowed to handle an oar in the boats which plied for custom between Scutari and Constantinople, he had become an expert waterman by the time he was eighteen years old. His mother, who doated upon him, having, by dint of intense saving, scraped up enough to buy him a caique, with its oars, mast, and sail, he was overjoyed one fine day to find himself installed as a regular waterman at the quay at Scutari,

in a pretty boat, and what was much to his credit, enjoying the good will and protection of some of the older watermen who plied at the same place. There he was to be seen, from the earliest dawn to sunset, crying out *Stambol, Stambol* at the height of his voice, like an old established boatman, continuing his vocation even after the Muezzins on the mosques had chaunted the call to evening prayers. Selim also knew when and where to seek for fares; he was acquainted with the times of arrival of the great passage boats from the Prince's Islands, from Mudania and the coast of Asia, also with the nature of the winds, when one particular wind would waft ships from the straits of Gallipoli and the Dardanelles, and when another would bring them in from the Black Sea. Thus intelligent and thus active, Selim and his boat prospered to his heart's content, and as he laid the daily amount of his gains in the whity-brown palm of his revered parent, he felt himself fully repaid by hearing her exclaim, "O, my son, may Allah give you plenty in return," to which he never failed to say, "Inshallah!"

It came to pass, that a long course of the Tramontane wind had prevented ships arriving from the Dardanelles, and Selim watched with anxiety for a change, in order that he might gain some employment. Just as he was retiring for the night, after he had properly disposed of his boat, he remarked that a change would take place before morning. Accordingly, he determined to be at the seraglio point before break of day, in order to be ready for whatever might happen. Having supped, as usual, with his mother, he informed her of his intention; and, accordingly, being refreshed by a sound sleep, before the dawn, when it was still dark, he found himself among the rocks, close to the extremity of the Sultan's seraglio.

He was just about to fasten his boat to one of the rocks, in order to keep himself clear of the current, when he perceived a secret door in the wall open suddenly, from whence two men issued, bearing a sack. This they threw into the sea with a heavy splash, and then as suddenly disappeared.

Selim was at first seized with a convulsive

thrill of horror; but seeing the sack float by him in the current, and perceiving something alive within, making great struggles for life, he rapidly threw himself on the side of his boat, and seizing it as it passed, dragged it with all his force within. He hastened to rip it open, which he did with the knife usually carried in the girdle, and having so done, he discovered that it contained, what indeed he expected to see, namely, a woman. He pulled his boat from the shore with all his might, without more observing his prize, than to perceive that she was still alive, and having reached the mid channel, he stopped, allowed his oars to hang to their pegs, and then bent over to take a closer survey. Finding himself free from observation, he placed his hand on her head, for her face was downwards, and gradually lifting her up, his eyes fell upon a form so graceful, and features so surprisingly beautiful, that, accustomed as he was to see no woman's face but that of his sable mother's, he scarcely could breathe from excess of surprize and admiration. Her eyes were closed; her face wore the ghastly hue of one drowned; but she

breathed and there was no doubt of her being alive. He took to his oars again, and pulled with all his might, hoping to reach his mother's dwelling before the day had entirely broke. In this he succeeded; and having ran his boat up high and dry on the beach, he immediately informed his mother of what had taken place, and requested her not to lose a moment in helping him to conduct the unfortunate woman to the house.

The negress was singularly kind hearted, and, without reflecting upon the consequences, she at once lent herself to the benevolent feeling which impelled her son, ran to the boat, and, by dint of great exertion, they at length managed to conduct the object of their care to their habitation, where they laid her on a bed, and afforded her such help as was in their power. Selim then left her to the care of his mother, who, having divested her of her wet clothes, replaced them by some of her own—poor substitutes, indeed, in point of finery, but though coarse, dry and wholesome.

"Wonderful, wonderful!" exclaimed the

negress, as she examined the various articles of dress, holding them up before her eyes, dripping wet. "Velvet, O, my soul!" she said, as she held up the vest. "Silk, as I am a negress!" she exclaimed, when she inspected the ample drawers. "Gauze and embroidery, by the soul of the prophet!" when she held up the chemise; and casting her eyes upon their beautiful owner, who was extended, in a scarcely animate state, upon her humble bed, she said:

"See what destiny will do. Better to be black and safe like me, than beautiful, and fit for drowning, like this poor thing. Allah is great! Allah is merciful! Had it not been for Selim, the fishes would have eaten her up. As it is, the fishes will owe Selim a grudge, and she will be grateful. Wonderful thing is *kismet!*"

She thus continued to moralize and speculate, as she hung up the wet clothes to dry, every now and then lending her ear to where the sufferer was reposing, in the hope that she might hear her speak, or give some sign of life.

At length she heard a groan, which made her run in haste to the bed side.

"What is it, *guzum*, my eyes," said the kind hearted negress. "Speak, I am here."

Upon this succeeded another groan, accompanied by a long drawn sigh, which was followed by the opening of the eyes.

"Speak," said Selim's mother: "fear nothing. Allah is great! and I am here."

"Where am I?" said the sufferer. "Where have I been? What place is this?"

"This is the house of the negress Rosebud, Selim's mother; fear not—we are friends, and we have saved you."

"Who is Rosebud? Who is Selim?" said the reviving woman. "Allah! O, Allah! where am I?"

"By the mercy of Allah," said Rosebud, "you have been saved from drowning by my son, Selim. You were thrown into the sea in a sack, and he picked you up. I have said *Shukiur Allah!* thanks to Allah! several times, and I say so again. I recommend you to say so too, for it is impossible to guess what may happen if you do not."

The fair one gently sighed out, "*Shukiur Allah !*" and, as she slowly raised up her head, and looked around, she inquired :

"Who is Selim ?"

"He is my son," said the fond mother. "He is the best of sons, and a waterman. He gives up his soul for me. He does not cease rowing, day and night; and he brings me money, and I say: "May plenty return to you, Oh, my son! He it was who saved you."

"But whose coarse things are these that I wear ?" said the fair one, whom, for the future, we must call Yeldez, or the star, and who surveyed herself with an unutterable look of dismay. "Who clothed me thus ?"

"Who but me; oh, my eyes!" said the negress. "I dressed you, I took off your wet clothes, I wiped you down, I lifted you from the boat to the bed, I wrung out the sea water from your clothes, and hung them out to dry. Fear not—you shall have them again, but you must wait. We are poor folks: we have done the best we can; and when all is done that can be done, as the man said when he had emptied all the

dishes, and laid himself down to sleep, what can we do more?"

"And am I to be here for ever?" said Yeldez, in an impatient tone. "Is the world gone from me, that I should lie here thus?"

"Allah forbid!" exclaimed the kind Rosebud. "Let us hope for the best. God is great! But it is something to have been saved from drowning!"

"I must be saved from a great deal more," said Yeldez, gaining fresh strength every moment, "or my enemies will find me out, and your saving me will have been to little purpose!"

"What can we do?" said the negress. "Speak, and we will act. Only let Selim return, and he will help us, we can hide you, and protect you. Rosebud is a free woman, and although she is black in the face, yet her heart is white and has nothing to blush for."

"*Aman, Aman!* Mercy, mercy!" cried Yeldez, in a fit of despair, having now come to a full sense of her desperate and forlorn situation. "Oh, woe, woe! where shall I go?

what will become of me? I am a lost creature—utterly lost! without a friend—without hope."

She then gave vent to a copious flood of tears, and bemoaned herself in such a manner, as drew forth the utmost sympathy from her humble, though devoted protectress.

"What say you? Oh, my eyes!" said Rosebud. "Am I nothing? You have fallen into good hands. Although we are poor and nobody, none shall hurt you here; besides, who knows of your existence except Selim and I? all else, curses be on their heads, think you, at this moment, at the bottom of the sea, and what more would you have?"

"What more?" exclaimed the ungrateful beauty, with a heart of stone: "what more, did you say? Is being thrown out of that divine harem nothing? Is being overcome by the malignity of those unsainted enemies of mine—those demons in human form, nothing? Is being a thing of naught, when no one was good enough to kiss my feet before, nothing? What words are these? You speak words without knowing their import. But I must go

hence—I must fly, or I shall be discovered, and then deaths, a thousand times worse than drowning, will be my portion. I must go. Where is Selim, that he may take me hence?"

"I will find him, and send for him," said the obedient negress, who without once calculating results, was ready to do anything for the beautiful, though wilful creature, that lay before her.

Selim, indeed, was not far distant; for his mind had undergone a great revulsion since this adventure, and he scarcely knew whether his heels touched the heavens, or his head the earth. He had never experienced the effects of woman's beauty before, and now his eyes had seen a vision of one, such as few Mahomedans had ever beheld. What could he do? fate had struck him, and forgetting his boat, he could do nothing better than sit on a stone on the shore, near his mother's dwelling. There he indulged in all sorts of thoughts. He felt quite certain that he had caught a princess, for what else could have been thrown out of the seraglio, where he was certain they were all princesses? But what was he? a poor boatman, and half a

negro, with his mother a negress. He sighed, as his mind dwelt upon this, because his heart was deeply involved in the fate of the beautiful creature he had saved; and he was ready to perform any deed by which he might hope to make himself agreeable to her. He was, therefore, not long in obeying the summons of his mother, when she called him to come to her assistance. When he entered the room, Yeldez scarcely deigned to cover herself with a veil on his account, but seemed pleased to observe the confusion of face which her beauty evidently produced upon the unpractised youth.

She was not long in addressing him; and, without making a single allusion to the fact of his having been her deliverer, she seemed to expect that both he and his mother should feel grateful for the preference which fate had conferred upon them, in throwing her into their hands. She said to Selim:

"Oh, man, look at me! this cannot be. I must not remain here—my blood will be on your heads if I do! I must go, and that immediately. Such beauty as mine cannot re-

main concealed, and if it be known that I am alive, then let Allah have mercy upon all our souls !"

Selim remained fixed on his seat like one struck with loss of mind ; he gazed upon Yeldez with the stare of one who could only see one thing. To hear such a piece of beauty speak, address him, seek his advice and require his assistance, made him feel that he was become a full blown man all at once. He knew not what to say or what to propose. The only wish which he could precisely define, was that she might sit in his boat and that he might row her about from morning to night ; in short, he willingly would have rowed himself to death on her account. He knew not what else to propose, for he was possessed of nothing but his boat and his strength. Seeing that he did not answer the words addressed to him, his mother exclaimed :

" Selim ! what has happened ? are you mad, hearing you hear not, and seeing with your eyes you see not—do you not hear the Kadun speaking to you ? Praise be to Allah, he is

born with all his senses perfect—it is only now that he has become like a lanthern without a candle in it. Speak, oh man!"

Selim then said, as if he were awakening from sleep,

"Upon my head be it! what is there?"

"There is this," said Yeldez; "you must get me the means of escaping hence. I want horses, I want clothes, I want trunks—you must come with me. If you are a man, hear me and act. Such things I want, therefore, such things go get."

The negress and her son stared at each other, and looked around at their poverty; they would have given all that Yeldez wanted and more, had they had it to give, but excepting to sell themselves, they saw no other means of raising enough to buy all that their guest required.

"We are poor and have nothing," said the tender-hearted Rosebud; "and many things are requisite. We might as well pray for the Sultan's crown as hope for a horse; and you want several. What are we to do?"

"Have you nothing to sell?" exclaimed Yeldez—"am I to die here in despair?"

"I have only got a boat," said Selim, "and that we live by; we would give you that, only you cannot travel on land in a boat."

"Cannot you sell that," said the stone-hearted Yeldez; "that would buy two horses, and we don't want more to take us away."

The very mention of selling his boat made Selim's tongue leap from its socket, and his poor mother too felt that such a proceeding would break her heart, and so they paused ere they made a reply.

"Speak," said Yeldez, "could you not sell your boat?"

"Yes," said Selim recovering himself, "certainly; we will do anything to save your life. Allah is great, Allah is merciful—as we have lived so we shall live."

"*Baricallah!* oh well done my son," exclaimed the negress. "You are a real man, and nothing is now wanting to secure the welfare of our guest. We will sell the boat, and as Allah is wise, so is he merciful;—whatever is—is."

Selim without more ado, immediately left the house and walked to the quay where his boat was anchored, and where he was sure to find several of his brother boatmen, to whom he intended to communicate the intelligence that he wished to sell his boat. When he got there he found an old waterman seated on the quay smoking his pipe, one who had been very kind to him when first he begun his career, and to him he gave notice of his intention.

"Allah, Allah! what has happened?" said the old man. "Selim, my son, are you clean mad?"

"*Kismet!* fate!" said Selim turning up the palms of his hands and shrugging up his shoulders, "what can I do?"

"God is great!" said the old boatman; "*bacalum*, we will see."

"*Bacalum* won't do here," said Selim. "*Wallah Billah*—by Allah and for the sake of Allah, I must sell my boat, and that right soon. Wherefore will you talk about bacalum?"

"Is it so?" said the old man taking a prolonged whiff of his pipe, "then very well."

He then began to calculate what the boat, its sail, oars, and other appurtenances might be worth, and assured Selim that he would find no difficulty in effecting a sale, since the boat enjoyed an excellent reputation, and there were not wanting those who would be happy to take his place at Scutari stairs.

Fortune, indeed, did favour him, for before long a purchaser came forward, and he found himself enabled, with the sum he received, to buy two *beguirs* or hack horses, which were likely to suit the purposes of slow travelling.

Selim, excited in a manner which was quite new to his nature, impelled by a passion which for want of a better word might be called love, at the same time depressed by the loss of what had stood to him in lieu of happiness and daily bread, Selim thus situated, appeared at the door of his mother's house, holding a horse in each hand, and announcing himself ready to depart, withersoever fate and Yeldez might direct.

His mother, nothing daunted by the loss she was about to sustain, and impelled by true

generosity of soul, no sooner caught sight of him and his new companions, than she exclaimed:

"Welcome, Selim! oh well done Selim! Allah will reward you."

Then addressing Yeldez, she said,

"Come, arise and go. Here are horses, and here is Selim ready to accompany you."

"Go!" exclaimed the captious beauty without even once attempting to express her thanks; "how am I to go without clothes? what words are these? Then how shall we proceed without a guide? Selim is no guide by land."

The oppressed youth delivering over the horses to his mother's care, with a sigh proceeded in search of a guide, whom having found, and having besides procured a veil and its accompaniments for Yeldez—the moment, at length arrived when all was ready for departure.

The magnanimous negress had controlled her feelings with a power only known to those who act upon principle, but seeing her son on

the point of being taken from her, her fortunes sacrificed, and the unworthy object of her anxiety scarcely sensible of her kindness, as when Selim approached her to crave her blessing, she fell upon his neck, and weeping violently, said:

"Go, my son—you have saved the stranger's life once, save it again by your exertions, and when you have deposited her in a place of safety, return to your mother. Allah go with you; forget him not, and he will never forget you;—go, may your journey be prosperous."

Selim acted almost mechanically; he received his mother's blessing without shedding a tear, although his heart was full almost to suffocation; he assisted Yeldez to mount her horse, he mounted the other himself, and preceded by their guide on a third, which carried what little baggage they had, they made their way through the streets of Scutari, and at length gained the open country.

It was the dusk of evening when they began the journey and they travelled onwards,

the road being lighted up by the moon, until they reached a village where they halted for the night.

They took the great high road leading to the city of Angora, whither it was their intention to proceed, and after having sufficiently rested, they resumed their journey. Yeldez appeared to be in constant apprehension, lest she should be seized in her flight, and eyed every man she met with fear and suspicion. She behaved towards Selim as if he were her slave, ordering him to attend her without the least compunction, and betraying no symptoms of obligation for his self-devotion. Never had selfishness before produced so favoured a child, but had this been the worst feature in her character it were well, for the sequel will shew that in her present position she was virtue itself, compared to what her character was in reality. Travelling or halting, her own ease and accommodation were first considered; her companion she merely considered as much belonging to herself as the horse which conveyed her.

Little reflecting upon her escape from death,

she appeared to feel insulted by the meanness and poverty of her equipage, and visited her ill-humour upon her generous attendant, by unceasing arrogance.

Selim on the other hand was entirely subdued by her charms; he obeyed her word as he would the mandates of a divinity; there was a magic in the tones of her voice, and a fascination in her manner, which overpowered all the senses of the youth and made him feel that he was honoured and much favoured by being allowed to approach and do her service.

Having reached Angora in safety, they took up their abode in the largest khan, the resort of merchants and caravans. A small room, the door of which opened upon a long covered gallery was allotted to Yeldez, whilst Selim took post at some distance near his horses. The khan was full of travellers, and all the rooms occupied.

Yeldez was disgusted with her state of destitution, left alone as she was in a room of which the sole piece of furniture was a mat, and she longed to better her condition. She looked about, as all needy adventurers do, for

some one on whom she could fasten herself, and fortune favoured her prospects. In the room next to her own, lived the harem of a merchant who had just arrived from Constantinople with merchandise. It consisted of his wife, children, and two female slaves, who being well off in their circumstances, enjoyed the comforts and conveniences of life, and eat and drank unsparingly every day. Yeldez, who found it difficult to procure the commonest meal, so scanty were the means possessed by Selim was greatly attracted by the savory odours that proceeded from the saucepans of the merchant's harem, and she very soon found a pretext for introducing herself there. She first ventured to peep in with her veil on, and seeing that the merchant himself was not there, she made her way boldly, and having pronounced her *Selam aleikum* with great emphasis, sat herself down on a good cushion next to the merchant's wife. The salutation being freely returned, Yeldez immediately put forth all her powers of fascination, and was not long in succeeding to make herself agreeable.

The merchant's wife was a homely person whose province, besides that of directing the household affairs, was to visit the harems of the great and wealthy among the Turks, in order to dispose of her husband's goods, consisting of silks, velvets and fineries, to their wives and daughters.

She was a gossip by profession, and travelling to and fro from the capital, she retailed news of the fashions, and histories of other harems, all matters of first rate importance to ladies in the provinces. Seeing one whose dress denoted a person recently arrived from Constantinople, and whose modes of expression and manner bespoke one accustomed to high breeding, she began to question her freely, and finding from her answers that she either was or must have been a lady of consequence, she treated her with great attention.

Yeldez could not refrain exhibiting her knowledge of the manner in which the women of the Sultan's Seraglio passed their time, and talked so freely of her intimacy with all the great and powerful of the land, that the merchant's wife

began to sink in her own estimation, and looked up to her new acquaintance as a person in every way likely to assist her in extending the sphere of her gains.

"Sit, sit, eat eat," exclaimed the merchant's wife, "put yourself at your ease; but tell me, oh my eyes, how does it happen that you are here, thus alone, thus unprotected. You a woman of Constantinople, how do you happen to be in a sorry inn at Angora?"

Yeldez had prepared a story, by which she explained, that being on her road to see her friends at Diarbekr, she was beset by robbers, despoiled of all she had, and managed to escape with only one slave.

She gave such a colouring of truth to this narrative, that the merchant's wife gave full credence to it, and she moreover expatiated so much upon the Sultan in person, upon Sultanas, and the imperial Seraglio, that the good woman concluded that she was talking to a Sultana herself.

Yeldez had formed a scheme in her own mind, of acquiring a footing in the harem of the governor of Angora; for she felt that once

there, her beauty and attractions would perform their office, and she would thus have gained an asylum of which she was so much in want. Finding the merchant's wife to be one exactly fitted to her purpose, she soon convinced her how useful it would be to them both were she, Yeldez, to be introduced to the governor's wife, to whom she would describe the modes of life in the Sultan's seraglio, excite her ambition to remodel her dress by that of the Sultanas, and bring before them the refinements of the capital.

The gossip was only too enchanted to be supplied with so new a subject to enlarge upon, and straightway betook herself to the governor's palace, and was soon admitted into the harem of that dignitary.

The governor of the city of Angora was a Pasha of two tails, a man celebrated for his justice, his mildness, and his observances of the Mohamedan law. He was dull of intellect, but good by nature and by principle. His house was as much a pattern of order and generous hospitality, as it was a picture of a monotonous routine, founded upon an undeviating round of

dull observances, and bigotted precedents. The wife of his bosom—his only wife, was the counterpart of this good man. A pattern of fidelity, true to her harem, unflinching in her daily habits, praying five times a day, and eating six; and whose utmost dissipation was simmering in a hot bath, or sitting, for an hour, on a tombstone, under a cypress tree in the great burying ground. They had a family of sons and daughters, all brought up with great care as good Mussulmans, and, excepting an occasional visit from such persons as the merchant's wife, who cheered them by new fashions from the capital, and related stories of what took place in other harems, they scarcely knew that any world existed beyond Angora and its vicinities.

As soon as it was known in the harem, that the merchant's wife, coming from Constantinople, was in attendance, a great sensation was produced. The Governor's wife first, then her daughters, then the maids and nurses, and lastly, the black slaves; all clapped their hands, and exclaimed "*Evallah!*" and when the welcome stranger walked in, carrying her burthen

of fineries, and fashions, she was greeted with exclamations of:

"*Hosh geldin!* Welcome! happily met! come in—sit. Praise be to Allah, your steps are fortunate! where have you been so long?" and all the numerous expressions of delight, so common to the lips of Turkish women.

The merchant's wife being duly seated, and surrounded by the whole female household, all displaying looks of welcome: the Governor's wife was at length allowed to put this leading question:

"Well, what news?"

"What know I?" said the merchant's wife; "there is nothing. All is well—very well."

"What news from Constantinople?" said the Kadun, "we are inhabitants of the country—we are people of Angora. What news from Constantinople?"

"What shall your slave say?" said the other. "The Emperor is there, the sea is there, the ships are there. Oh my soul, Stamboul! but I have brought such things—such marvels! There is not a Sultana, not even the Valideh, herself, who possesses such things as I have

brought! Velvets from Genoa, silks from France, cloth from England."

Upon which, opening her packages, she exhibited to the longing eyes of those around her, the fashions of the last year, as the novelties of the season.

During the exhibition of her goods, she did not cease to talk freely of the harems of the neighbouring Pashas and Agas which she had visited; giving accounts of the dresses of the women, accompanied by tales of gossip and scandal, which rendered her, perhaps, a more welcome visitor, than the exhibition of her wares.

But, not satisfied with this, the Governor's wife, being still eager to know more of what was passing in the interior of the Sultan's seraglio, questioned the woman steadily upon the subject, who then informed her of the existence of Yeldez, and of the acquaintance she had made with her.

"As you love your eyes, I swear," said she, "I believe she is a princess, herself! Such airs! such graces! such Constantinople

phrases! If you want to know of Sultans and Sultanas, send for her."

She then related what she knew of her history, and straightway recommended that she might instantly be invited to appear.

Contrary to her usual prudence, the Governor's wife, who, if she had one defect, was overweening fondness of hearing of, and talking about persons of rank and distinction, without a moment's hesitation, despatched an old servant maid with an invitation to Yeldez to come without delay.

As may well be imagined, Yeldez was overjoyed to find her scheme so successful, and forthwith followed the old woman.

When she threw off her veil in the face of the assembled harem, great was the astonishment at her beauty, at the superiority of her manner, and, tattered though they were, at her garments. She took advantage of the effect she produced, by ingratiating herself, all in her power, with the Governor's wife, who she so entirely overcame by flattery, and by making her believe, that she, in her position, was

as great as any Sultana in the Emperor's seraglio, that she entirely took possession of that lady's good-will and affections.

Yeldez's arrival seemed to make a new epoch in the annals of this dull community. She expatiated greatly upon dress; and gave such alluring descriptions of the articles necessary to the full attire of a lady of distinction, that the merchant's wife had not hands enough to supply the demand made upon her stock in trade.

Yeldez became the object of every one's admiration and affection. They conceived she had fallen down from Heaven, purposely to make them happy. They believed every word she uttered; were ready to do anything she desired; and finding how great was the influence she was likely to acquire, she soon determined to make the house of the Governor of Angora the scene of her future exploits.

She was, however, a little appalled, when she heard a remark, during the morning's conversation, that his excellency was passing his time, before the noon-day prayer, in ordering and superintending the decapitation of three Jews,

for sundry crimes committed; an instance of vigour in the administration of the law, for which, considering the mild character he bore, she was not prepared. She, however, succeeded in taking up her quarters in the Governor's house, which she did, without reference to the unfortunate Selim, who, for the present, she allowed to remain in the care of the horses, in the khan.

Having succeeded in making good her case with the Governor's wife, and daughters, when the evening came, the time when the Governor himself would appear, she was prepared with these, her new friends, to plead her cause, and give plausibility to her tale.

The Governor, Mustapha Pasha by name, was a small man, made large by dress. He heaped pelisse upon pelisse, and cloak upon cloak, until he had warmed himself up to the point he desired. And, in so doing, he increased both the measure of his circumference, and the respectability of his appearance. When in public, he wore an immense caouk, or cap, wound with long folds of white muslin, which he immediately threw off when he

entered the harem, where he indulged his ease by a lighter head-dress. His features were more grotesque than regular, because a large roman nose occupied the principal part of the face; but they were enlivened by eyes full of expression, and shaded by a brow not slow in being contracted. He was short in stature, and would have been some inches taller, had his legs been straight; but by sitting cross-legged during his infancy, they were curved, and, consequently, bandy.

So soon as he entered his wife's apartment, his whole manner changed. He was no longer the dignified man in authority. In throwing off his great cap, and supernumerary pelisses, he discarded every reserve; and he entered into all the business of the harem, and engaged in all those minor objects, interesting to his wife and daughters, with as much zeal as if he were one of its constant inhabitants. On the present occasion, after he had been well welcomed, and had placed himself at his ease on his wife's sofa, in answer to her upbraidings for long absence, he answered thus:

"Eh, my eyes, what could I do? After all,

they are Jews, and putting them to death was necessary."

"But what crime had they committed?" said the wife. "Must you always kill?"

"Crime?" said Mustapha Pasha; "they were Jews—is not that enough? Let alone their stealing—let alone their defrauding—is not a Jew worthy of death, at any hour of the day? Go, go—your heart is too good! The Sultan did not send me here to soften my heart towards a Jew. But who have we got here? who is that?" said the Governor, pointing to Yeldez, who, having crouched down in a corner of the apartment, had listened to every word that had been uttered.

"She is nothing," said the wife; "she is a *músafir*—a guest—an unfortunate one, who comes from Constantinople; and travelling to her friends, at Diarbekr, was robbed, and is come here to seek refuge."

Upon this, the wary Yeldez, who had hitherto covered herself with her veil, seeing that Mustapha still kept his eyes fixed upon her, dropped it, and exhibited to his eager glance those charms, which had enslaved the heart of

one much greater than the Governor of Angora. She then, in apparent confusion, huddled up her fallen garment, and covered herself again, enjoying, through a small crevice, the state of excitement into which she had thrown the unwary man.

Mustapha was like one whose eyes are suddenly dazzled, by perceiving a sunny landscape through the partial opening of a fog. Accustomed as he was to the homely features of his wife, the small beauty of his own daughters, and the hideousness of his women slaves, his feelings underwent so great a revulsion, upon being struck by such a flash of beauty, that the ponderous Governor was turned, at once, into a lively gallant. He became interested in the stranger, inquired into her history, was officious and obliging, and showed how powerful are the effects of a woman's glance upon man's unprotected nature.

His wife, good soul, in perceiving her husband so moved, was pleased to find that her new friend had also found a protector in the Governor, and increased in her attentions. She appointed a place for her to sleep in, gave her

clothes, provided her with every necessary, and in short, loaded her with kindness.

Yeldez, finding how great was her success, determined to confirm it, by performing an act, which is always looked upon of importance, in Eastern countries, as coming from an inferior to a superior, that is, making a present. She came to the resolution of asserting that Selim was her slave, and of presenting him, as a gift, to the Governor. By so doing, she intended to confirm her pretensions to being a person of consequence—thus insuring good treatment to herself, and also ridding herself of the youth effectually; confiding in her own ingenuity, and superior powers of persuasion, to suppress any untoward effect which his own story might produce. No feelings of gratitude checked her: she cared not for the preserver of her life; she did not reflect upon all he had abandoned to fulfil her wishes, nor upon the ruin she had brought upon his poor mother—she only intended to please herself. The selfish Yeldez became flint when her interests were concerned.

Accordingly, the morning after her successful

attack upon the Governor's heart, she claimed an audience from him; and, in set terms, with that volubility of tongue, which was one of her characteristics, she related her story. Stating how, that for family purposes, she had left Constantinople properly escorted, that she was on her road to Diarbekr, when, in a forest, she had been robbed, and that the only one of her escort who had remained faithful, was her slave, Selim, whom she now presented, in gratitude for the favours already conferred upon her.

In doing this, what with soft sighs, side glances, and direct stares, she so enchanted and subdued Mustapha, that she seemed, from that moment, to have acquired unlimited power over him.

She then sent for Selim, upon whom, in consideration of the liberty she had taken to dispose of him, she now bestowed her attentions, and persuaded him how much more to his advantage it would be, to attach himself to the Governor of Angora, who would not fail to advance his fortunes, than to return to the drudgery of a boatman's life at Scutari. Selim

allowed himself to be persuaded, and sub mitted. Unconscious, however, of having become a slave, he was appointed to the office of deputy pipe-bearer to the Governor, and was soon distinguished by his master, for his docility, sagacity, and the integrity of his disposition.

Yeldez no sooner began to feel the extent of her power in the harem of the Governor of Angora, than she determined to exercise it to the utmost. Her first object was to excite mutual ill will between the husband and wife. Aware that jealousy would induce quarrel, she said to herself:

"It shall be my fault if that quarrel does not lead to hate."

Her view was to eject the reigning *kadún*, and to substitute herself in the affections of the unsuspecting Mustapha. Now, Mustapha and his wife, good, old fashioned believers in the prophet, excellent disciples of the true faith, had lived together as man and wife for above thirty years—their tempers, by force of habit, fitting into each other, as ill-shapen feet, after much pain and many wry faces, adapt them-

selves, gradually, to new shoes: their tastes assimilating, as water, poured upon vinegar, and sweetened by honey, makes very good sherbet; so their manners softened, as one stone rubbed against another begets a good polish. Even their very faces became portaits of each other, as the butcher, with much intercourse with fat meat, likewise fattens.

This good couple had thus progressed through the journey of life, satisfied with its dullness, rejoicing in its uniformity, and unambitious of any change which might endanger the similarity which one day bore to its predecessor. They dearly loved these soothing words, "*yavash yavash*, slowly, slow; *bakalum*, we will see; *pek eyi*, very well; *Inshallah*, please God; *Ilhamdillah*, thanks to Allah;" and were acquainted with no better philosophy, when visited by a vicissitude, than saying, "*Né apalum*, what can we do?" and submitting, with resignation to *kismet*, or destiny.

It was between these two individuals that the object of Yeldez was to disseminate jealousy and hatred. Having well infatuated the governor, she began to play upon his wife. She first

hinted with the assumed confidence of unbounded friendship, that she ought to leave her, not to intrude upon her hospitality.

"What has happened?" said the good lady, "is there anything you want? do not you eat what you like?"

"My eyes! what words are these? your kindness is all in all," said Yeldez with downcast eyes; "but something has happened."

"Something!" exclaimed the other with unusual alacrity, "does anything ever happen at Angora? something indeed! what is something?"

After a little hesitation she said,

"My Aga, the governor, after all is a man—he has eyes, he has a tongue; it is plain there is a something, and it is better I should leave you."

The first essay which Yeldez made to arouse suspicion in the breast of the Governor's wife failed; a lighted taper will extinguish in a stagnant atmosphere.

The cob-webbed heart of the Turkish woman was not so easily to be swept of its old habits. It required a still greater exciting power to arouse its latent passions, and Yeldez not dis-

couraged by the failure of her first attempt, did not lose an opportunity of repeating it with increased vigour. She succeeded, at length, in rousing suspicion, the first effects of which were indeed more comical than serious.

Those eyes which had so long been accustomed to look upon her husband as a necessary ingredient of the harem, as fitting to be there as a cushion or a tandour, were directed at him, with oblique glances and curious pryings. Those ears which long had heard the daily repetition of words at particular hours and relating to objects as habitually occurring as is the rising and setting of the sun, were now alive to catch sounds wherewith to feed suspicion, and when uttered, were tortured into unusual meanings.

That mouth which received its food without a suspicious feeling, would now hesitate and dread the possibility of poison; in short, the unfortunate lady having given ear to the insinuations of the most wicked Yeldez, became a prey to the worst of jealousies. She lived in one constant state of prying, listening, whis-

pering, stepping on tiptoes, and watching in dark passages. She became suspicious of everybody and everything. Although Yeldez conducted her game with the dexterity of a most finished coquette, and with the experience of one who had been playing the game of life or death in the royal seraglio, yet she could not so completely mask her actions in so circumscribed a theatre as a common-place harem, as to throw off all suspicion from herself.

The Governor's wife began in truth to doubt her professions of friendship, and although Yeldez continually swore upon the Koran that she gave no encouragement to the jealous woman's husband, still facts spoke against her. He daily became more assiduous, his advances to the stranger were more open, and all the harem began to entertain suspicions.

At length, the storm so long threatening broke out with violence. The Governor's wife could no longer overcome her feelings, and seizing the opportunity after her husband had just issued from the bath, his beard and moustaches trimmed with more care than usual, the tips of

his fingers dyed and his most alluring silken vest exhibited, she addressed him with words such as the following :—

"*Haif, haif,* Mustapha Aga! Shame, oh shame! Mustapha Aga, are you a man, with that grey beard of yours, and that wrinkled brow, that you should be dressing up and dying your fingers like a young *chelebi,* a musk scented coxcomb? If ever you had sense, where is it? Is it worthily exercised in peeping under veils and talking to the strange woman? Oh shame shame—and you the chief of a city too, a thing to which the world looks up! this must not be—after all I am your wife—your old wife—I have grown grey with you, I have brought up your children, and am I now to be put away for one who has no other recommendation than being a stranger with a young face? I would not have spoken, but my soul is running over; and not to speak were to burst."

"What words are these?" said the Governor, who felt abashed by this attack, and who willingly would have escaped it. "Why do

you bring strangers into the house—it was your doing, not mine. Shall I not be hospitable? Shall I prevent the destitute from sitting under my shade?"

"What words are these?" retorted the Kadûn; "hospitality indeed! oh well done! Does hospitality enjoin you to ape an old goat? does hospitality tell you to sigh and look like a fool? hospitality feeds; it gives refuge to the houseless and protection to the oppressed; it seeks to give comfort and not to raise disquietude; hospitality indeed!—so much for your hospitality!"

Upon which the injured lady extended her five fingers into her husband's face.

"Then as for your shade—there is that for your shade!"

Upon which, in wrath, she spat upon the ground.

"Who wants your shade? Yeldez wants to entice you to sit under her shade, and to seduce you from your old affections and old habits, making a fool of one who has ever been thought wise, and creating disturbance where there has

ever been peace. This must not be—Mustapha Aga—she may become the mother of dogs if she pleases, but be you yourself."

"Woman!" exclaimed Mustapha, who had by this time recovered his self-possession, "woman, do you count man for dirt or less than dirt that you talk to me thus? Are we made men for nothing, that we should thus be rated, and are women subjected to us by Allah and his holy prophet that we cannot look where we please and as we please without being spat upon and reviled? If the woman Yeldez has found favour in our eyes, what harm is there? why should it not be?"

These words had no sooner escaped from Mustapha's mouth, than they were taken up by his enraged wife with all the violence and avidity that is sometimes exhibited by an angry dog chasing a stone that has been flung at it.

"What harm is there, say you? And have I lived to hear this, I who have been your faithful companion for thirty years? Are you run mad, Mustapha Aga? has sense taken leave of your brain, or has the devil got into it?

All the world will point their fingers at you, and say, *poof, poof!*"

Her words following close upon each other, gathered too fast to find utterance from her mouth, until she at length roared and vociferated with such violence, that the whole harem became alarmed, and collected in a body to hear.

The goaded man also became angry, and losing that composure for which he had ever been remarkable, was carried on step by step from flushings in the face, to clenchings of the hands and stampings of the feet, then to words of remonstrance, then to expressions of violence, and lastly to constraining by the hand, until he came to that awful result, blows. He beat his wife with his pipe, whilst she, groaning, retaliated with her slipper, until the whole scheme of the wily Yeldez's art was consummated, and the utmost violence of hate was established between those who had never before suspected that such a feeling could exist in their breasts.

They parted, vomitting forth mutual execrations, whilst Yeldez, with exultation in her

heart enjoyed the confusion, and whilst the harem, cheated out of its wonted quiet, was thrown into utter dismay, the children crying, and the slaves and women wild with apprehension.

When the cup of man's misery overflows, a reaction takes place, and he seeks relief either in some act of desperation, or relapses into resignation. The Turk usually flies to his pipe, and so did Mustapha. He quitted the chambers of the harem with a slow and solemn step, covering his retreat by quick explosions of growling and anathemas, and straightway made for a small cabinet overlooking the distant country, in which he took refuge.

He instantly called for a fresh pipe; his pipe-bearer, Selim, seeing the state of his master's mind, approached him with more than usual deference of manner, and kneeling as he placed the long chibouk in his hand, looked into his face with an expression of sympathy.

The oppressed man seemed relieved by this

attention, as one smothering is restored by fresh air, and at once said,

"Selim, my son, this is much!"

"What has happened, oh my master?" said the pipe-bearer.

"What has happened? this much has happened," said the master, "that I am killed by those unsainted women."

"Women indeed!" said Selim, "it is nothing, young as I am, have I not too been the victim of a demon of a woman?"

"How is this?" said the governor, happy to have found a brother in wretchedness

"As I am your slave," said Selim, "did not that vile woman Yeldez, who has gained access to your honour's harem ruin me and my poor mother, when we had saved her life, and has she not made a slave of me when I was born a free man?"

"Ah, how is this?" said the Governor; his whole soul awakened upon hearing the name of Yeldez. "How is this—speak—let me hear your whole story, for if you be really no slave I am not going to break the laws of our

blessed Koran by detaining you as such—speak on."

Upon this, Selim, whose heart had long been watching an opportunity to disburthen itself of its weight of grievances, gave a full and true account of his adventures, from the time of seeing the secret gate opened in the wall of the imperial seraglio, and rescuing Yeldez from her watery grave, to the moment of being presented as a slave to the Governor of Angora.

During the recital, Mustapha often and frequently carried his hand to his beard and stroked it down in astonishment; gradually he seemed to be restored to the full possession of his right reason; he saw that he had become the plaything of a vile woman, his conscience smote him, he felt how unjustly he had behaved towards his wife—often did he ejaculate:—

"Allah! Allah!"

Willingly would he have spat into his own face when he recollected how much dirt he had been made to eat; at length, when Selim had done and had taken up his usual position of respect, standing with his hands before him,

the Governor sat down in deep thought, and he was ordered to leave the room.

When Mustapha was alone, he broke out into every species of malediction, common to an angry Turk. He prayed for indignity to be heaped upon the father, mother, and ancestry of Yeldez. He cursed himself for consenting to be made so great a fool. He pulled his long beard out from before him to see whether an ass were appended to it. He remained quite assured that he was that ass, and he groaned within himself. Upon one thing he was determined, which was to expel Yeldez forthwith; he would not allow himself to dwell upon her beauty—he shut his eyes with an abhorrent shrug, lest something stronger than himself should place her again before him. The Turk knew what temptation meant, and felt its power, but he was deficient in the true motive to repel it. He then asked for another pipe, and eyed Selim with increased complacency, calling him son and child. Indeed his constant previous kindness had won over the affections of the youth, who having now un-

burthened his heart, vowed love and fidelity to his master for ever after.

It was then that a confidential consultation took place upon what was best to be done to get rid of the wicked woman. Mustapha was for sending her back to his imperial master to be drowned over again; Selim resisted this, for his heart was kind, besides he felt that, as a boatman and her deliverer, he might be inserted into the same sack, and drowned in her company. At length, the governor exclaimed,

"Let her go to Diarbekr, in the name of Allah—to Diarbekr she shall go. She said she was going to Diarbekr, let her go there or to Jehanum."

And so it was decided; it was ordered that she should be given a steed and provided with a guide, and invited forthwith to leave the city, and go to Diarbekr. Selim was ordered to make every preparation to this effect, and he received positive injunctions, on no account, to allow her to have access to his master.

"By Allah!" exclaimed Mustapha Aga, "if I come within eye-shot of her, I am a dead

man. *Aman, aman!* those eyes! Shaitan in person looks out of them; they act like a talisman upon me—I tremble—my flesh creeps—my tongue cleaves to my mouth, and however well I may think of my wife and children, I am like water before them. Aman! Aman! those eyes!"

In the mean while, the Governor's wife, swelling with rage and overcome with confusion, retreated from her husband's presence with the same precipitation with which she would have fled from the *Shaitan al ragim.** She hid herself, and allowed no one to approach, until her anger, having in some measure abated, she called for that never-failing consolation, her cherry-stick pipe, and was soothed more by its fumes than by the power of her own reason.

Yeldez, who had managed to witness the whole scene, no sooner observed how efficaciously her acts had operated, than giving a loose to her vanity, she concluded that she

* Shaitan al ragim, or the stoned devil, the devil driven away by stones, thus meaning that the temptations of Satan ought to be rebuked with violence.—See D'Herbelot.

was forthwith mistress of the harem, and conducted herself accordingly. She began to order about the slaves and direct the household, and even had the audacity, after some little delay, to follow the Kadûn into her retreat, and administer the mockery of consolation, in words to the following effect. Taking her seat unasked, she said :

"In truth, this is a strange world! Sometimes one is up and the other down, and then again it changes—those who are down are up, and the up down. Be you consoled. Allah is great—Allah is merciful. I, who am a thing of nought, am not unmindful what is your due; happen what may, I will be your friend. Should you require lodging, I will be here to order it; if you are in want of food and raiment, there will be no lack of that."

"*Behey*!" exclaimed the Governor's wife, "what words are these? Would you girt me with a saddle, and bestride me as you would a beast? Is it not enough that I have trouble in my own family, and shall a stranger come and give herself the airs of being its chief? Go,

woman, go put a padlock on your lips, and keep your tongue in its proper place."

"Is it thus you speak?" exclaimed Yeldez, placing herself in an attitude of defiance. "My Aga, upon whom be blessings, is not a man to allow those he loves to be trampled upon. His house is his own, and his will the will of his servants. I am ignorant by what numbers you calculate, but my numbers, when placed side by side, give me a safe result. After all, there are more wives than one in the world, and Angora can well afford to present a second wife to its Pasha."

"Begone, woman!" exclaimed the Governor's wife, whose rage having now taken a new direction, broke out with increased violence. "Leave the house immediately. You, a wretch who, but for my interference, would have died of hunger, who came into the house fawning like a famished cur, and now turn round and shew your teeth like a pampered dog. You, who by dint of lies, have made us believe that black was white and white black, are you now to take the lead where you were happy to sit

in a corner unnoticed? Whatever the Aga may be, he is not the wretch you suppose. Allah has not yet turned the world upside down, nor placed the feet of slaves upon the necks of their masters."

Yeldez was not slow in indulging her wrath, which set in with a storm of words so violent and exciting, that the once pacific harem, so long the abode of peace and somnolency, was no more to be known—no longer a Paradise; its Adam had been turned out, and its Eve become a demon.

Suddenly in the midst of the strife, a message was brought from the Pasha to Yeldez, requesting her presence without the walls of the harem. This message, like water sprinkled upon fire, produced an instantaneous effect, for Yeldez received it in the full persuasion that the whole of her expectations were about to be realized, whilst the Governor's wife, in dismay, apprehended the worst. Yeldez sought her veil, and with exultation in her demeanour, stalked out to meet the messenger, certain that she would return mistress of the house. But she was destined to be greatly mistaken and

mortified, for at the door she met Selim, who no more her slave, and still less her devoted admirer, requested her to prepare for immediate departure.

"Departure! are you mad, Selim?" she exclaimed, with some little trepidation in her accent. "Departure! who is going—who is to depart?"

"May you live for ever," said Selim, "but it is you who are to depart, and it is I, the less than the least, who have received the Pasha's order to see his commands obeyed."

"And whither am I to go?" continued Yeldez, her face now white with apprehension. "Who has done this?—Why is this?"

"You are to go to Diarbekr," said Selim, unmoved. "You were going there before, and you must go there now."

"To Diarbekr?" said Yeldez, in increasing despair; "what have I to do there? Why am I sent to Diarbekr?"

"You are going to your friends," said Selim, ironically. "Your friends live at Diarbekr. You know you were beset by robbers in the forest, despoiled of every thing you possessed,

and your slaves fled, all excepting me. The Governor does not wish to detain you; he has provided you with a mule, he gives you money and a guide, and he prays that Allah may protect you,"

Upon hearing these words, the unfortunate woman began to cry and to bewail herself, when suddenly her grief was converted into rage, for turning round her head, she observed that all the women of the harem, slaves, black and white, with the children, were collected together near its entrance, headed by the Governor's wife in person, in order to witness her departure, whilst joy and exultation beamed in every countenance. The negresses exhibited their white teeth, the children shouted, and execrations gradually broke forth, as with uplifted hands they motioned her to go, and shewed themselves prepared to bar the door should she venture to return.

"Go! go!" they exclaimed; "may heaven send you misfortunes! May your liver drop, and ashes fall upon your head!"

Seeing that all hope of success had disappeared, she became as abject as before she was

arrogant. She turned towards Selim in the hope of softening his heart. She caressed him by enticing words; called him her eyes! her lamb! her flower! She tried the power of her beauty and the expression of her eyes, and put forth all her eloquence to persuade him to allow her access to the Pasha. But Selim was inexorable; he was now proof to her wiles, and therefore refused to listen to her entreaties. For all answer he merely pointed to where her mule was in attendance. She prayed, she entreated, she promised reward, she threw herself upon his generosity, and reminded him of their former friendship, but without success; to every word he lent a deaf ear, excepting to the last appeal, when no longer able to express his indignation, he spoke as follows:

"Do you talk of friendship, O, weak one, after having violated every tie? It is not to boast that I speak, but I saved you from death, my poor mother received you in her house, humble though it be, and tended you as her own daughter; we sold all we had, the very boat which gave us bread, to ensure your safety; I abandoned that good mother to

labour for you, and how have we been requited? No expression of thanks has ever passed your lips, and by way of reward, you disposed of me as your slave—with your good will I should never again have been free. But my blessed *kismet* has thrown me into the hands of a good son of Islam; he is my friend and benefactor, and I have, thanks to Allah, been so happy as to rescue him from the wiles and wickedness of a faithless woman. No, do not look to me for friendship; be satisfied that you are allowed to leave Angora in safety, and not returned to those enemies of yours who would have destroyed you, but for my interference. Come, mount and begone."

The wretched woman, seeing that her case was hopeless, proceeded without more ado to mount her steed, and accompanied by the guide, forthwith set out on her journey to join a caravan. Her enemies from within, when they perceived her in the act of departure, set up a shout of joy which pierced her very soul. Convulsed by feelings of grief, rage, and revenge, she wound her way through the streets

of Angora, uncertain as to her future destiny. After allowing her evil passions to revel in malediction and execration, she gradually resorted to those words of consolation, the refuge of every Mussulman in distress—'Allah kerim, God is merciful!' These she pronounced ever and anon, crying and bemoaning her fate until she reached the caravan, which was encamped on the skirts of the city preparatory to its departure on the following morning.

The caravan was composed of a variety of classes, mostly of merchants who were escorting their merchandize to the different markets on the road, of which Diarbekr was one. Yeldez was escorted by her guide to its principal conductor, into whose hands he was ordered by the Governor of Angora to place her, which having done, he returned whence he came, leaving the lone and destitute woman to seek her own fortunes. She, however, was not one who long gave herself up to despair, for in the beauty of her face and the graces of her person, she was conscious of possessing a

charm irresistible in its effects, wherever men were congregated. Accordingly she lost no time in ingratiating herself with the said conductor, from whom she gained the information she required, relating to the persons, the station in life, the wealth and importance of those who composed the caravan. The principal personage, he said, was an aged Seyid—a man of the law, who was accompanied by his harem, and whom he described as old, deaf, and almost blind. He had two wives, the one as infirm as himself, the other very young, to whom he had been united only the day previous to their departure; these, with two black slaves, completed his household. The wives travelled on mules, the slaves in *kejawehs*, or cages, he himself on horseback, accompanied by two men servants, a valet, and a cook. They lived very much apart from the rest of the company, and were bound for Bagdad, where he held a high situation among the Ullemah.

To this party, Yeldez, determined to attach herself. She carefully inspected all her other fellow travellers; but, after due consideration, she found that the Seyid and his women would

best suit her views. With them, she might ensure protection; besides, it was plain that they would abound in good eating, which, to her, was a matter of high consideration.

Accordingly, availing herself of those arts, of which she was mistress, she soon became acquainted and intimate with the wives of the Seyid. She secured the good will of the old lady by listening to her complaints, and taking her part in the one great grievance of having a second, and younger wife, foisted over her head; whilst she absolutely fascinated the young wife by her power of flattery, her liveliness and grace, and by the superiority of her manners and knowledge of life. She carefully secluded herself from the gaze of the old Seyid himself, although, in truth, he was so blind that he could scarcely distinguish one face from another; and also adhered, with great pertinacity, to her veil before other men, in order, thereby, to secure to herself the character of a respectable person.

But there was a calculation in all she did, as will be seen by the result, for her object, in fact, was to usurp the place of the younger

wife. She remarked that she and that young person resembled each other very much in height and in figure, that their voices were alike, and that in the presence of a purblind man and a half-witted old woman, such as were the Seyid and his wife, there would not be much difficulty to pass herself off as the one whose place she wished to usurp. She knew that the acquaintance between the old folks and the young wife was of the very short duration of two days, and that, therefore, she, the young wife, could not have made a very lasting impression upon her new connexions, and she conceived that by practising a very small portion of deceit, could she but get rid of the impediment that stood in her way, she might become the wife of the old Seyid, and no one be a whit the wiser.

She passed her whole time in ruminating over this scheme. She made herself fully mistress of the young wife's history, of the names of her relations, of their occupations, their modes of life, and did not lose an opportunity of adopting her manners and her peculiarities of speech. But when she came to

the mode of putting into execution the imaginations of her brain, she became puzzled. To administer poison was at present out of the question; could her victim, in some dark night, be carried away by the violence of a torrent, nothing, she felt, could be more opportune; but torrents were no respecters of persons, and she might be drowned as well as her rival. No, the scheming Yeldez no sooner built her castle in the air, than it vanished, and left her a prey to the horrors of uncertainty. In vain she endeavoured to console herself by a constant repetition of *kismet, Inshallah,* and *Allah kerim;* but these soothing words stuck in her throat, and she learnt thereby that she was a daughter of Islam in word only, not in deed.

The caravan travelled slowly onward; day after day it reached its evening destination, and still Yeldez was as far as ever from the execution of her scheme of wickedness. They reached Sivas, where they sojourned for several days, and where, amid the dark and lonely streets of that city, she hoped to find some opportunity of making her friend lose her way,

and thus be rid of her presence for ever. But no such good luck happened. The women resorted to the public baths in company ; they sauntered into the burial-grounds, they lounged in the bazaars ; and all this was done without giving Yeldez the opportunity she so anxiously sought.

At length, the caravan was again collected, and resumed its journey. The first night after leaving Sivas, it halted near a flourishing village, where it laid in a store of provisions, whilst Yeldez, in anticipation of reaching Diarbekr before she could realize her views, became depressed in spirits, her companions meanwhile being elated.

The next night, however, they were conducted to quite a different scene. In the neighbourhood of the halting-place, perhaps about half a mile distant, was situated a village in ruins, which, not very long since, had been abandoned by its inhabitants. It consisted of a collection of houses and hovels totally untenanted, and of a mosque, with its minaret, the only building which looked perfect. A path led directly to the village, and the place

of worship was of easy access. This spot at once struck Yeldez as likely to aid her scheme; and as the day drew to a close, she invited her companion, the young wife, to accompany her in a stroll to the ruined village.

"Come, my eyes," said she; "perhaps we may find something to carry away with us. Who knows! our luck may be on the rise!"

The other, full of life, and ready to adopt any proposal which might break the monotony of her existence, readily acceded, and away they went, laughing and talking, though careful to avoid notice. It was dusk when they reached the village; they visited some of the tenantless houses, and only found a cat, one of the last of its inhabitants. Yeldez then said,

"Now, in the name of Allah, let us go to the mosque. We will ascend the minaret." She then waggishly exclaimed, "I will do my best to invite the faithful to prayers."

"Let us go, as you love me," said the young wife; "let me see whether you can chaunt the *azan* as well as my husband, the Seyid."

Upon which, they laughed with unfeigned

merriment. When they stood before the door of the minaret, Yeldez perceived that it was closed by a wooden bar from without; withdrawing it, she found the winding stair-case quite practicable, and said,

"I will go first."

Upon which, she ran up with haste, crying out to the other to remain behind until she should tell her to proceed. When Yeldez got to the summit, she found the entrance to the small gallery which surrounds the minaret, quite blocked up with fallen stones, so much so that it would be impossible to proceed without great difficulty. It was then that Satan infused a horrid idea into her mind. She became at once convinced that she could destroy her companion. What so easy as to confine her within the minaret? By bolting the door from without, she would be secured without a possibility of escape. The wicked woman immediately acted upon this impulse. She returned below, and telling her unsuspecting victim that nothing was easier than the ascent, she invited her to enter.

"I am half afraid," said the young wife, laughing; "were I to meet an Imam* coming down upon me, how he would frighten me!"

"Fear nothing," said Yeldez; "I will see that no one comes."

Upon this, the doomed sufferer, gathering up her veil, tripped in, and had not proceeded many steps, before she heard the door close and the bar run into its groove.

"What has happened?" she exclaimed, little conceiving what was the real truth; but still without suspicion, she continued to wind upwards, until she came to the encumbered orifice, where a stone so large, surrounded by rubbish, was fixed, that she found it impossible to proceed. Still she imagined no deceit, but with a light heart, returned, exclaiming to herself, "I will make her soul weary for this trick!" When she reached the bottom, she found the door closed. Still she imagined no mischief, but smiled at the trick which she thought was intended. She exclaimed, in the innocency of her heart, "Yeldez, my soul, open—it is getting quite dark; we must not

* The officiating priest at a mosque.

tarry longer." She waited for a reply, but not a sound did she hear. Again she exclaimed, "Yeldez, open—this is no child's play—let us begone." Still no sound. Then, in a tone of alarm, she cried out "Yeldez" with all her might, and continued repeating that word, increasing the violence of her scream, until terror took possession of her mind, and threw her into a state bordering upon distraction. There we must leave her, to relate what befel her too wicked companion.

It must be told that Yeldez, in contemplation of the possibility of perpetrating the crime which we have just related, had purchased at Sivas, a veil precisely the same as the one usually worn by the young wife. It was of blue chequered cotton, and differed from the one usually worn by Yeldez, which was white. She had purposely adopted her new veil, in order to identify herself with her companion, and now, in complete disguise, the murderess in intent, fled hastily from the spot in which she had secured her victim. She heard her cries, but her heart was hardened. She continued to hear them for some time, but they died gra-

dually away as she approached the halting-place of the caravan, and there she was rejoiced to find it was impossible they could be heard. She passed on stealthily to the spot where the Seyid and his family were settled, and taking upon herself the duties and acts of service of her who was absent, as soon as possible, she lay herself down to rest. Nothing was said or done that night which could make her suspect that she was herself missed, or that the victim of her villainy had been inquired for.

Early in the dusk of the morning, as usual, the caravan was on its road, and Yeldez, personifying the young wife, took possession of her steed, and placed herself precisely in the position she would have occupied, riding in her place, and acting her part as if she belonged entirely to the Seyid. The only misgiving she felt, was the probability that a search would be instituted for herself when it was known that the mule which she was accustomed to ride remained unappropriated; but she was soon relieved from this apprehension when she perceived it mounted by a way-faring man, who had hitherto escorted the caravan on foot, and

who seemed to have quietly taken possession of the beast as his own property.

Accustomed as Turkish women are in a journey never to lay aside their veil, which conceals the face as well as the entire person even from their own relatives, it may easily be imagined how safe Yeldez was in her metamorphosis, and considering the taciturnity of her nation, it may be asserted that she scarcely had an opportunity of exercising her voice during the whole succeeding day.

In the evening, however, at the termination of the day's journey, the old wife who was accustomed to receive attention from Yeldez, seeing that she did not appear, exclaimed:

"Where is Yeldez Khanum?—why does she not appear?"

"What do I know?" said the counterfeit; "they say she has remained behind at Sivas."

"Is it so?" said the old woman, apparently not much concerned at the loss, "then bring me a pipe."

The old Seyid too, who had been the object of the designing woman's peculiar care, inquired

for her, but was soothed by the increasing attractions of his supposed young wife, who now, as he thought, began to acquire his ways, and adapt herself to his humours, and, therefore, he became indifferent to the attentions of the stranger.

Thus circumstanced, the Seyid, his old wife, Yeldez as the young wife and his servants, reached Bagdad in safety, without any one materially suspecting the change that had taken place. The old wife occasionally would start at the sound of Yeldez's voice as not being the same to which she had been at first accustomed, and sometimes was surprized that the young interloper, whom she expected to be all arrogance, and who of course she thought would exert her whole energies to supplant her, should, on the contrary, be more than attentive and obsequious; but these were passing excitements. Finding her life undisturbed, she relapsed into her usual apathy, and falling back upon *bakalum*, and *pek eyi*, and *shukiur Allah*, which formed nearly the whole vocabulary of her philosophy, she allowed events to take their course, and was contented.

But this state of things did not long continue. Yeldez finding herself installed in a comfortable house, well cushioned and carpetted, herself the depository of the old man's affections, and in a situation to be supreme in his house, threw off her former habits of subjection and took upon herself the entire command. She began to neglect the old wife; she fed her sparingly, and in the course of time threw her into a corner to scramble on as well as she could, looking upon her as a piece of ancient lumber. She did not fail to exhibit her own beauty on all fitting occasions, in a manner to let it be known that the old Seyid possessed a wife without compare, and so great was her reputation, that it became a matter of boasting and self-congratulation among the gallants and men of pleasure in Bagdad to say they had seen the Seyid's new wife. Her society was courted by the first women of the city, and she repaid such courtesies by inviting them to expensive entertainments, increasing the retinue of her servants, and freely spending the money which her supposed husband had passed his life in hoarding.

She was not slow either in endeavouring to curry favour with men as well as women, for although the Seyid was scrupulously observant of the decencies and propriety of the harem, and assailed any man with vigour who might venture to invade them, yet so full of wiles was she, that she secretly encouraged favourites, and took pleasure in turning the heads of those to whom she deigned to afford a view of her charms.

Among others, a young Cazi, who from his talents was bidding fair to become one of the first men of the law in the city, was particularly attracted by her fascinations, and passed his existence in paying his court to the old Seyid, thus seeking an excuse for prowling about the premises which contained his lovely wife.

As time passed on, the state of the Seyid's household assumed a totally different aspect to what it did on the first days of his return. Yeldez had made it a house of feasting and dissipation; it began to acquire an indifferent reputation—whispers of improper proceedings within the harem itself were circulated—the cause of

the old woman was taken up and canvassed, the injustice committed towards her was censured—the friends of the old Seyid thought it right to apprize him of what was said—he became alarmed, he found himself on the brink of ruin, and much confusion ensued; Yeldez, upon being made aware of such proceedings, became arrogant and insolent, and instead of suppressing her indiscretions, she only the more increased them, and thus were matters situated, when one day towards sunset, having prepared an entertainment more than usually gay and expensive, an event took place which put an effectual check to her career.

She had invited many harems of distinction to her house. First came the wife of the governor and her suite, then the women of the Mufti, then those of the chief merchants and of the elders. She displayed her best carpets, set her fountains playing, and spread her floors with the choicest fruits and sweetest flowers. She hired women dancers and bands of musicians, and it was also secretly rumoured, that wine was to be had in the guise of Franc sherbet. By way of a great treat, she had per-

mitted the old Seyid, her reputed husband, to be present, and in order to soften down all asperities, she allowed his old wife to look out of a hole at what was going on. When the company had taken their seats, of a sudden a great noise was heard in the street as of the arrival of a caravan. Camel-bells, shouts of drivers and horsemen, trampling of horses' feet, and other indications of a travelling body were distinguished, and strange to say, the whole of this disturbance directed its steps to the Seyid's house and there stopped.

"What is this?" said one.

"Whence do they come?" said another.

"It must be a mistake," echoed a third.

At length a messenger came running in haste to announce to the old Seyid, that Omar Aga, the brother of his young wife, with a body of cavaliers, escorting a lady in a takhteravan, had arrived from Angora, and inquired for him, peremptorily insisting upon seeing him. At this intelligence, which soon was carried from mouth to mouth, Yeldez was seen to turn deadly pale, whilst her eyes were directed up-

ward towards a summer-house, where scandal afterwards asserted that the young Cazi had taken post.

The old Seyid immediately arose and proceeded to the men's apartments of the house to receive his guest, apparently highly delighted at a visit which he so little expected; but Yeldez appeared strangely perplexed what to do, or what conduct to pursue.

It was still worse, when she perceived a female completely veiled from head to foot, entering the scene of festivity, and proceeding directly towards her. Her heart told her who she was, and she almost sunk into the earth with apprehension. All the women present looked on with surprise, expecting something wonderful to happen, and they were not disappointed; for suddenly the disguised stranger threw open her veil, and discovered to the trembling Yeldez the face of her whom she had confined in the minaret at the deserted village.

"Who are you?" said the culprit putting on as much an appearance of innocency as she

could; "who sent for you?—wherefore are you come?"

"Is it thus you speak?" said the real wife, "is it thus you look upon one who, had it not been for the decrees of fate, would have been put to death by your hand?—woman without a soul! woman without shame! Where is my husband; let him speak—where is his wife?"

"Here! here!" cried out the old woman from the hole, "here—oh my soul—my eyes—my jewel! are you come indeed! we have all been living in a mistake—the Shaitan has taken possession of us;" upon which she was seen issuing from her retreat in haste into the midst of the assembly, and shuffling along, she ran with extended arms, and threw herself upon the neck of the new comer, exclaiming:

"Welcome, welcome! oh my soul! oh my eyes! we have been in the hands of the Shaitan —here—bid that woman begone, pointing to Yeldez, who having aroused herself into a fit of convenient anger, was pouring forth excla-

mations and execrations at no limited rate, asserting her innocence, and insisting upon her being a true woman and no counterfeit.

The cries of the old woman having been heard by the slaves and servants of the household, they ran to the scene of action, when, to their joy, they saw their original young mistress, and soon expressed their approbation. Such is the catching nature of the sound of many uplifted voices, that all the assembled women, connected and not connected with the family, began to vociferate, and the babel of voices that ensued was such, that confusion was never more complete. Yeldez ran from one to the other, her features distorted with excitement, gesticulating as might a maniac, exerting her utmost powers of grace and eloquence, in order to gain adherents to her cause, whilst the new comer and the old woman, denouncing Yeldez as an impostor, stood their ground, bidding her defiance, calling at the same time upon the name of the old Seyid their husband.

He was not long in appearing to their call,

for tired of the arrogance and tyranny of Yeldez, he was delighted to find that sober and quieter views were now opened to him. He had willingly listened to his brother-in-law's exposition, and speedily betook himself to the assembled women, where, accompanied by the proper authorities, he at once ordered the culprit to be seized and carried before the Cazi, the proper magistrate for trying a case so circumstanced. Yeldez resisted with all her might; she swore by every head and beard she could devise, she invoked Allah, and entreated the holy prophet; she denounced curses on her accusers, she fawned and flattered those whom she hoped might be her friends, and more than all, she exhibited her bewitching face to such men as were present, ever and anon looking towards the spot where she knew the young Cazi was secreted; and thus excited, thus beset, she followed the law officers to where the judge lived.

Now the judge was an infirm man, an old Cazi, who had retired to his own house after the labours of the day, and was taking his rest

when he was aroused by the disputants we have just described, who came seeking for judgment. The complainant, a Seyid, one highly respected among the Ullemah, enjoyed the privilege of calling upon his friend the Cazi at this unusual hour, and followed by his brother-in-law, his wives, and the many women who took part with them, they with mutual consent adjourned from the scene of the projected festivity, to the tribunal of the dispenser of justice, bearing with them, duly escorted, the wretched offender, the disgraced Yeldez.

The judge surrounded by his scribes and his officers of justice, marshalled the parties before him; the accuser with his witnesses standing on the one side, whilst the defendant stood on the other. Seeing who was the prosecutor, he invited him, with his brother-in-law, a man of wealth and power, to sit near him on the judgment seat, whilst the women remained huddled together below.

Yeldez was totally deserted, but seeing her admirer the young Cazi standing near the elder Cazi, the judge who was to pronounce

upon her case, she took courage and looked with a bold and confident aspect upon her persecutors.

The judge then ordered the complainant to state his case, which he was beginning to do, when Yeldez taking the words from his mouth in round terms accused him of falsehood, an accusation which became a signal for every tongue present, women and all to be let loose, which produced such unutterable confusion of sounds, that the judge in despair placing his head between both his hands, roared out as loud as he could.

"You are eating dirt—I am dead—you have killed me—cease, as ye love Allah!"

But seeing that it was impossible to obtain silence from the women, he ordered his attendant officers to lay about them with their sticks, which they did indiscriminately, until partial order was restored.

Silence having been obtained, the judge proceeded to hear the complainants, and seeing they were persons of importance, backed by a cloud of witnesses, whilst the defendant had

no one to speak up for her, with very little ceremony he ordered that she should be tied up in a sack and thrown into the Tigris.

The young Cazi hearing this, made signs to Yeldez not to fear, and then threw himself forward vigorously, apparently to see the sentence executed. Together with the attendant officers, he seized upon her, treated her with great rudeness, made a show of violence, and dragging her away, before the assembled crowd, carried he off, whilst she in fact, fearing the worst, and not having quite understood what were her admirer's real intentions, uttered the most piteous screams, and begged that her life might be spared, in accents that would have softened stone.

The young lawyer, however, only increased his savage zeal, but whilst he dragged her into a secret place by way of thrusting her into the fatal sack, he slyly whispered to her,

"Fear not, I will save you."

And so he did, for having secured one of the attendant officers as his accomplice, he first thrust Yeldez into a dark room, and then

proceeded to put his scheme into execution.

He cast his eyes upon an old goat that had long been made an inmate in the judge's house, which, by the help of his accomplice, he succeeded to thrust into the sack, and then forthwith in the face of those who were assembled to see the sentence put into execution, he threw the struggling brute headlong into the river.

A tremor seized all those who witnessed the fact; but it was remarked that the poor woman made a very strange noise as she fell, a noise which every one said they would have taken for the cries of a goat had they not been certain that the sack contained a woman.

This, to all appearance, was the fate of Yeldez at Bagdad; but she possessed so ardent a lover in the young Cazi, that she soon was redeemed from her state of thraldom, and restored to more liberty than ever she had before enjoyed. The youth, her deliverer, was in truth a frantic poet. He had devoted his mind to severe and

mystical studies; and the subject of love had so entirely absorbed his faculties, that he had passed his time in seeking an object which might realize those imaginations of female beauty and loveliness which filled his mind. When he first caught a glimpse of Yeldez, he was satisfied that he had found what he had so long been seeking.

His heart became, at once, inflamed with love; his imagination invested her with all the charms of Shireen, and he determined to make himself a Ferhad. His muse at once became prolific; he wrote verses from morning till night, he wandered into the desert, he sought every opportunity of making himself wretched, and determined to fast, and become thin, in order that he might adapt his person to his poetry. Ferhad and Majnun, those two famous lovers, which he proposed to himself as his models, he knew lived on barren mountains, and encountered every vicissitude of want and hunger, out of love for their mistresses, thus becoming models of thinness, and examples of woe and self-devotion. He determined not to be outdone by them, and devoted

himself accordingly. Neglecting his person, he had haunted the premises where his mistress lived, in the hope of being allowed to see occasionally the hem of her veil floating in the wind.

Yeldez was not slow in perceiving the conquest she had made, and encouraged her lover by those thousand little arts, so well known to the softer sex. His love and imagination were wound up to the highest pitch of frenzy, when the catastrophe took place, which led to the sentence of death being pronounced against his beloved. He determined to save her at any cost, and having schemed her rescue in the manner above described, was rewarded by gaining possession of her person. On that very night, having prepared every thing for flight, he conducted Yeldez forth, when no one was present to watch their steps, and crossing the river, he there found two steeds in readiness, which, mounting, they fled, and took the road towards the frontiers of Persia, which, once having passed, they knew would secure their safety. They struck into the mountains, the young Cazi impelled by a strong desire to become Ferhad without delay, and when they had

reached a lonely dell they stopped to take breath. The youth, after assisting his beloved to alight, his feelings, irresistibly impelled by an exalted imagination, prepared to exhibit some act of self-devotion. He fell at her feet, kissed the print of her footsteps, ventured to touch the hem of her garment, and made all sorts of prostrations, accompanied by the most impassioned professions of admiration and love.

Yeldez, meanwhile, worn with fatigue and hunger, began to fear that her deliverer, in rescuing her from death, had taken leave of his senses. In lieu of all this love, willingly would she have seen a piece of bread and meat. Instead of this incense to her charms, happy would she have been to have smelt the fumes of a certain roasted lamb, upon which she had set her mind.

"Oh, soul of ecstasy!" exclaimed the enraptured lover, "let the dust of your slipper be made into perfume for my senses. Let the breeze which plays through your tresses, become the life's breath of my existence. When you inhale the ambient air, may a portion of my miserable essence pass into your

nobler nature, and may the breath which flows from your heart be taken up, and infused into the inmost recesses of my soul!"

"I wish you could find me something to eat!" exclaimed Yeldez, growing extremely impatient at such ill-timed rhapsodies.

"Eat, say you? Oh, my tender fawn, my sugar-loving parrot! wherefore should we eat? Let us live on love! Let a mutual passion be our food; and, let the world go on as it may, we will bury ourselves within the recesses of these mountains, and be all in all to each other!"

"Why talk so much, in the name of Allah, when I am dying of hunger?" exclaimed Yeldez. "Up, and let us be going. I cannot stay here all night—let us find food and lodging."

The romance which filled the breast of the young Cazi, became much qualified by the matter-of-fact view taken of their situation by his mistress; and although, in his own mind, he willingly would have considered her as a young and tender fawn, anxious to fly from persecution to the protection of

the wilds and fastnesses of the wilderness, yet this craving for substantial food, which she expressed, made it clear to him, that for the present, at least, he must cede to her intreaties; and that she was one of those adorable creatures who are only in love when they have leisure to be so, and who never allow themselves to enjoy a rapture upon an empty stomach.

They again proceeded on their journey, and before night closed, reached a village by the road side, where Yeldez was refreshed by the food she so much desired, and where they passed the night. The designing woman was entirely taken up by the unfortunate turn which her affairs had taken; and whilst her lover was constantly endeavouring to urge his suit, she would check him by reverting to the untoward circumstance of her rival's reappearance. She did not cease to upbraid herself, for not having properly secured the upper part of the minaret, in order to prevent the exit to the gallery, for it was evident that the young wife, finding herself imprisoned, had worked vigo-

rously with her hands, until she had made an outlet, when, managing to make herself heard from the minaret, she was released by the first passing caravan, which conducted her back in safety to her parents in Angora.

In vain did the enamoured Cazi endeavour to place the sentiments of his heart before his mistress, she would always revert to her own position, inquiring with pertinacity what he was about to do for her, whither take her, and how provide for her maintenance. Twice had she been saved from drowning, and still did her uncompromising selfishness lead her to act, as if gratitude and submission were feelings unknown in the human heart. She urged him to conduct her to some populous city, where, in her inmost heart, she hoped to bring her charms to a better market than she ever could hope to do in the desert to which it was the desire of her romantic lover to restrict her; but he, jealous with apprehension lest he might lose his prize among men more powerful than himself, and impelled by that poetry of love which would make him devote his whole ex-

istence to the one object of his adoration, he determined to keep at a distance from the haunts of men.

Leaving Kermanshah at a distance, he bent his way to the far-famed Bisitoon, the great monument of the labours of Ferhad, his prototype, where that celebrated lover passed his days, endeavouring to calm the eagerness of his passion for Shireen, by chiselling the rock into historical records, at once exhibiting his talent and registering his virtues. The Cazi hoped, that by shewing this place to Yeldez, as an impressive lesson of what he himself was ready to perform for her sake, she might be softened into an assimilation of sentiments, and accede to his wishes. Accordingly they travelled onward, she, day by day, growing more impatient, he hourly becoming more enamoured.

When they had reached the range of rocks in which the monument was situated, the lover began to exhibit symptoms of his poetical ardour. As he approached the sculptures, he dismounted from his steed, and threw himself into a posture as if he would worship. He

conducted Yeldez to them, related the story of the loves of Ferhad and Shireen, and then asked her why they should not be the same to each other as were those famous lovers. What was his horror when he heard Yeldez exclaim,

"Are you mad, O, little man? Are you a fool, or am I an ass? Rocks what are they? Stones what are they? What are stone-cutters to me? Who was Ferhad?—may the grave of his father be demolished. And who was Shireen?—one bereft of reason—who knows? Why should we be so? For the love of Khoda, take me hence. I am perfectly dead with fatigue, wandering about day after day without knowing whither! Let us go where a woman can talk, see, and enjoy herself—why continue to treat me as a fool?"

These words fell upon the ear of the Cazi in accents so offensive that they choked his utterance; he felt as if they had been seared upon his brain. Inflamed by his passion, he was unwilling to complain, still he could not refrain from saying to himself, "And is my devotion and love to be repaid thus? After

all, gratitude is something, and she might express some little thankfulness to me for having saved her life!" He would have broken out into violent anger, had not a glimpse, which he obtained of her unrivalled beauty, again enslaved him, and thus bound and chained, he continued to travel onward until they reached the capital city of Persia, whither Yeldez insisted that she should be conducted.

By the time, however, that they had reached Ispahan, the intensity of his admiration had very considerably diminished, for romance, like a fire of straw, if it be not fed, soon becomes a mere vapour. The Cazi forgot that he was a Ferhad so soon as he found himself an inhabitant of the luxurious capital of Persia. He wandered through its magnificent *bazaars*, cast his bewildered eyes over its wealthy *bezestens* sauntered with open-mouthed astonishment along its great maidan, stood entranced before the Allah Capi, the gate of the imperial palace, and loitered with all the enthusiasm of a poet, in its umbrageous groves and among its delicious gardens. When he thought upon

Yeldez, he would exclaim, with a contemptuous shrug:

"Whose dog is she?" and passing on from one beautiful spot to another, he would tacitly settle in his own mind, that he would not save such another life again in a hurry. She, in the mean while, having entered a new world, surrounded by the various attractions of a great metropolis, among a lively and agreeable people, she could scarcely contain her delight. Her Cazi appeared to her a man of nothing, compared to the gay and glittering cavaliers belonging to the court of the great Shah, who were ever crossing her path, and making her long to be one of their jovial band. Whenever an opportunity occurred, she did not fail exhibiting her face to those whom she thought might be able to drag her from obscurity, and it was not long ere her desires were accomplished.

The emissaries of the Shah's *khajeh bashi*, or chief of the eunuchs, were ever on the watch in caravanserais, and places of resort of strangers, in order to discover objects, who, either by their beauty or their accomplishments,

might be fitting ornaments to adorn the imperial seraglio.

Much time did not elapse before the beauty of Yeldez, the *Türki*, the Turkish woman, as she was called, became known, and, at length, she was made so much a subject of conversation, that the caravanserai in which she and the Cazi had taken up their quarters, was thronged by men endeavouring to gain sight of her.

One morning, subsequent to a quarrel between her and the Cazi, when, in audible accents, she called him dogs' father, and unsainted ass, which caused him to run into the street, exclaiming, "May the grave of her father be polluted," she was surprised by receiving an unannounced visit. A well-dressed man stepped in with an air of authority, and said, "*Selam aliekum*, peace be with you." He did not wait to be asked to sit, but seated himself at once, and then looked around him with great complacency. A servant who followed, having lighted his kalian and given it to him to smoke, the stranger, emitting a few whiffs, spoke as follows:

"I am come on the part of the Shah; I am his servant." At these words, Yeldez's heart began to beat with new sensations, and hope sprung up therein that she and the Cazi would soon part.

"What can your slave do that may meet your pleasure?" said Yeldez. "The commands of the Shah speak joy to the heart of this less than the least."

"You have spoken well," said the eunuch, for such he was. "You are a weak one, with wisdom at command. Exhibit more wisdom, by shewing your face."

"Upon my eyes be it," said Yeldez; upon which, without more words, she threw off her veil, exhibiting to the eunuch a power of beauty for which he was little prepared. Although in reality he was delighted, (if such a feeling ever forced its way into the heart of a similar being,) yet, like one sent to cheapen an article of purchase, he exhibited no symptom of approval, but with stolid eye and wooden face, said,

"*Khoob, aib ne dared*—well, there is no harm done; and then, having desired her to

stand up and expose the shape of her figure, which having done, he again said *Khoob*, and *aib ne dared*. He then inquired,

"Are you married?"

"Astafarallah! Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Yeldez; "what have I to do with a husband?"

Upon which, the eunuch repeated his words of negative approbation, and then said,

"Be ready to appear before the Shah after noon-day prayers. If it be agreeable to Allah, your fortune will be on the rise; and let me give you one word of advice. Keep your eyes open; this is King's business, and no child's play. Should any dog's father say aught to this proceeding—hear my words—tell him to keep his tongue within the confines of his lips, or else we know holes out of which we can make it jump. I have said, — *khoda hafiz*—Allah preserve you."

When the Shah's officer had taken his leave, Yeldez could not restrain her joy. She clapped her hands, and made exclamations aloud, expressive of the delight which filled her heart. "I shall be the Shah's lady. Once within the

royal harem, leave Yeldez alone to enjoy her own way. I will have the Shah's beard in my hand before another month is over, and lead him about as one governs a dancing-bear. Where is the Governor of Angora now, and where the Seyid of Bagdad? Mashallah! Yeldez will soon be a King's wife! I defile the grave of Governors and Seyids!"

Entranced with such like feelings, did the Cazi find the once beloved of his heart when he returned from his walk; and when he perceived her to be bursting with delight whilst he was overpowered by melancholy, he became extremely anxious to ascertain whence sprung this flow of new sensations.

"What has happened?" said he. "Has the mother of misfortune begotten a child of joy, or has woman become so perverse that she laughs when she ought to cry? Speak, for my head goes round with wonder and uncertainty."

"O, little man," said Yeldez, "your head may go round for want of something in it. We laugh for reasons good. Good fortune comes to our threshold, and walks in unasked. My fortunate hour to-day, is just noon-day, if

know you must; and when next you seek Yeldez, take care that there be not a crowned head in the way. Mashallah! we have seen things, and we have heard things! the world is a strange world!"

"Tell me," said the Cazi, in earnest, "what has happened? Is one who has saved your life, and abandoned everything for your sake, to be treated as a stranger? Are you to jeer, when he sighs? Must you make him say *lahnet*, curse, when he wishes to bless you?"

"What words are these?" said Yeldez, with the utmost levity of manner. "If fate says one thing, are you to say another? Things have happened, I tell you; and when you were out, and your place was empty, one who is nothing, came and said something, which something, changes Yeldez from a wandering beggar, to being a Shah's lady. Have you understood?"

The Cazi was not slow in apprehending what had happened, and although he at first felt that his heart was not entirely dead to jealousy, still, so entirely had his affections

been crushed and his hopes disappointed, that he was delighted, upon cooler reflection, to be rid, upon so easy terms, of what had been both his delight and his misfortune. When noon came, he stood by and saw, with unchanged aspect, the vile and heartless Yeldez take her departure from the caravanserai for the royal palace, escorted by a eunuch, who walked by her side, as she bestrode a horse handsomely caparisoned, which had been sent to conduct her away.

Inflated with vanity at her new position, she merely turned her head towards the Cazi as she passed by him, unmindful of her great obligations towards him, and little caring whether she should ever see him again.

His plans for the future were soon made, for he quitted Ispahan that very day for Bagdad, cursing Yeldez and her sex from the bottom of his heart, totally cured of his romance, and his love of stone-cutting.

She, however, was conducted straight to the royal palace, and thence to the seraglio. The town was ringing of her beauty, and the curiosity

of the women was at its utmost, to see one who was to make them hide their diminished heads, and, consequently, they were already leagued in a conspiracy to destroy her power, even before it began to be exercised.

The Shah, having retired from the public audience of the day and said his noon-day prayers, seated himself in his great open hall within the harem. The principal women then took their post as usual, each according to their rank, preparatory to the arrival of Yeldez. When she was seen entering the court, escorted by the eunuch, a general whispering took place, and when they both had made the proper prostrations, the eyes of all were rivetted upon the new-comer. She did not take off her veil until ordered to do so by his Majesty himself, when, aided by the attendant eunuch, she exhibited her face, and then again knelt down and kissed the ground. Her undoubted beauty attracted all the attention of her royal master, whilst it created a general feeling of jealousy in the women. The Shah gazed at her long, ordered her to approach,

and was much struck by the regularity of her features, her brilliant eyes, and her unrivalled complexion. But when, in answering the questions put to her, she opened her lips to answer, much of the charm was dispelled. The life of an adventurer, which she had led, had greatly worn off the feminine look and manner, nature's best provision for the attractions of womankind, and in the language she uttered, however clothed with artificial humility, however varnished by flattery, there was an impudence and an assurance which subtracted much from her attractions.

The Shah, who was a great connoisseur in female beauty, was not slow in perceiving these characteristics, and soon determined to which class of the many women, who composed his harem, she was to belong. He inquired what were her accomplishments—whether she could dance, sing, or tumble. These questions took her by surprize, mortified her vanity, and lowered the high pretensions to which she aspired. She freely owned that she could neither dance, sing, nor tumble.

"There is no harm in that," said the Shah. "Inshallah! you will learn. Mashallah! you are made to be a *baziger*. You will be unequalled when you have been taught!"

Then addressing the head of the eunuchs, who stood near at hand, he said:

"Here, conduct Yeldez Khanum to the house of my dancing women: let her be well lodged, clothed and fed; let her be put into the hands of the mistress, the teacher of our bazigers; and when she can play, dance, and sing, and, moreover, tumble, in a fitting manner to be seen by the Shah, let her be conducted before us again, and, Inshallah, her face shall be made white."

Yeldez, upon hearing these words, was ready to sink into the earth, whilst a titter broke forth among the assembled women.

"For the love of Allah, oh King!" she exclaimed, "I have never danced. I am a woman of birth. I have been accustomed to stand before princes. Wherefore, will you degrade your servant? Is this hospitality to a stranger? I am not fit, 'tis true, to kiss the

feet of your Majesty, but, still, I am a woman, and a true believer."

These words, spoken with energy, at first staggered the Shah's resolution; but when he again remarked the air of assurance with which they had been spoken, and the bold front which she presented, he persisted in enforcing his original order, and she was carried off to the house in which the royal bazigers, or dancing women, resided.

In a remote part of the palace, at Ispahan was an *Imareh*, or court-yard, and a set of chambers, exclusively appropriated for the use of the bazigers.

The number of these ladies was usually restricted to twenty-four. The choice ones, alone, those who were specially the King's favourites, resided in the palace: the remainder, being billetted about in private houses in the city, were required to be ready to perform, at any given time.

They were subject to the superintendence of a chief, an old woman, who paid their wages, kept them in order, suppressed

acts of jealousy and violence, even with the whip, if it were necessary, and was responsible that they were fitted to appear before the King. There were female *ustads*, mistresses, to teach dancing and tumbling; and even male masters were appointed; a circumstance which denotes, more than any other fact, how vile the profession of a dancing woman is considered.

Yeldez was installed in a small apartment, consisting of a sitting-room, a shoe closet, a kitchen, and a place for servants, and was soon informed of the duties it was intended she should perform. Her pride revolted at the degradation; and considering that she was in the hands of the most despotic of kings, the violence of her manner and language placed her in a very dangerous position. As a professed dancer, she felt that she should be lost for ever; her character would at once be fixed among the most infamous of her sex; a result, which, whatever might in reality be her practice, she was not prepared to encounter. Whatever might have been her position in the seraglio at Constantinople; whatever her conduct with

Selim, or her practises in the household of the governor of Angora; however flagrant her conduct as the false wife of the old Bagdad Seyid—as the romantic mistress of the infatuated Cazi; still, she had never fallen so low as to dance, in public, before men for hire.

With these sentiments fermenting in her heart, it is not surprising that she rebelled when invited, the first time, to stand up and dance.

"I won't dance," she said, when the *ustad*, or mistress, called upon her to receive her first lesson. "May my father be burnt first! May the graves of all dancers be defiled. What sin have I committed, that I am made to twist and turn about my body, like an unsainted snake? I am a woman of character; wherefore am I brought here? Go, tell the Shah, I will not dance!"

"What words are these? What dirt are you eating, O little woman?" exclaimed the dancing mistress. "Are you come all the way from Bagdad, to teach a Shah who is to dance and who not? Have you no soles to

your feet—or have you any soul at all? The *felek* makes many a creature dance, who never dreamt of dancing. Come, rise, stand on your feet, and try a jump."

Yeldez still resisted. She possessed a spirit, which, once roused, did not easily subside. She refused to obey. Again the ustad persisted; again Yeldez refused; and so utterly did she brave the dancing mistress, so out-talk and overpower her by perseverance in refusal, that nothing remained to be done, but either to have recourse to the bastinado, or to report her conduct to the higher authorities.

Judging that her great beauty might, perhaps, be the means of gaining permanent ascendancy over the Shah, the prudent dancing mistress delayed coercion, and waited until circumstances should decide what she could not decide for herself.

It happened as the ustad intended. The Shah, who, in truth, had remarked the beauty of his new slave with approbation, and persuaded himself that she would become the first of dancers, was impatient to be in-

formed of the progress she made; and, some few days after his interview with her, he thus addressed the chief of the eunuchs:

"The baziger, that new dancer who was brought before us the other day, what has happened to her?"

"As I am your sacrifice," said the officer, who received daily reports of the state of the dancing department; "as I kiss the slippers of the Asylum of the World, it is a bad woman. Whatever we may do, she will not dance."

"How is this?" said the Shah. "Are the King's commands treated as nothing? What has happened?"

"May my eyes be blind, oh Shah!" said the eunuch: "but the weak one says she is a woman of condition, and will not dance. She has a refractory soul, and laughs at the royal commands!"

"Has she yet eaten of stick?" inquired the King, drily.

"As I am your sacrifice," answered the other, "we have refrained from coming to that

extremity, before the royal commands were issued, lest her feet should be destroyed; but let the word, from the lips of perfection, be uttered, and, straightway, your slave will put them into practice."

"Bring the slave hither," said the Shah. "We will judge with our own judgment."

Accordingly, the chief of the eunuchs went his way to seek out, and bring into the royal presence, the wretched Yeldez, who, having for some time been allowed to remain unmolested, was enjoying, in her mind, the triumph which her pertinacity had gained over the dancing mistress. She had already began to give herself airs over the other dancing women, and was laying plans for the subjugation of the Shah himself, to the power of her charms, when the chief of the eunuchs appeared to conduct her to the royal presence.

"Rise, and come; the Shah requires your presence," said he.

Yeldez could scarcely breathe, for agitation.

"I come," she said. "But how shall I dress?"

"Come, without more words," said the other, "and follow me."

She did as she was commanded, and very soon after stood in the presence of the king.

"Oh, little woman!" said the Shah, "what words are these I hear? Wherefore will you not dance? Wherefore not obey the royal command? Are you mad? Are you not aware, that to disobey is death?—To oblige us to speak twice, is perdition? By what figures do you reckon?"

"The Shah is master to do with his slave whatsoever it seemeth best," said Yeldez, in great humility, "and her poor understanding informs her, that so great a sovereign must be obeyed without demur; but, as she also knows that he possesses a great mind, and a sound brain, she is certain that he will not command what is impossible—she never has danced, nor ever can dance."

These words, having been uttered with all the expression that the arts of coquetry could command, she waited, with anxiety, to see what effect they would produce in her favour.

The Shah, who was peremptory in his commands, seeing how obstinate a subject he had to deal with, would allow of no further expostulations, but, making a motion with his hand, which was well understood by the khajeh bashi, she was conducted whence he had brought her, and, without more ado, he ordered a sound bastinado to be administered to the soles of her feet.

The unfortunate Yeldez was little prepared for such a result to an interview from which she expected nothing less than the entire subjugation of the Shah's heart; but, when she saw the preparations for punishment, by the introduction of the awful felek, and the procession of stout women, bearing long sticks, her heart sunk within her, and she became entranced with fear.

Without allowing her time to retract her resolution, she was seized, her heels thrown into the air, and, by the command of the chief of the eunuchs, received such a castigation, that in truth, her terrors, when thrown into the sea, seemed but as child's play to the

agonies she now underwent. She roared, she begged for mercy, she intreated, until, from excess of pain, she fairly fainted. She then was unloosed, and thrown into a corner, there to get well in the best manner she could.

Wretched woman! When she came to herself, she moaned over her fate, and exhausted her mind with vain regrets, for having so cruelly treated the Cazi, who was so ready to devote his life to her service. What would she not have given to return to him, and even to inhabit the howling wilderness, as well as subsist upon his beloved dry bread and water!

However, the severity of the treatment she received only tended to harden her heart. She was more than ever determined not to degrade herself by becoming a dancing woman, and she freely announced this her determination to those around her. She poured forth her execrations, in language, such as even a Persian baziger had never heard.

Her companions became convinced that a live demon in woman's form had been imported

from Bagdad; they almost fled from before her presence. Exaggerated reports of her power of annoyance and endurance were spread throughout the royal harem, and every possible intrigue was set on foot to persuade the Shah to reject her and dismiss her for ever.

The Shah who loved beauty, and who was sensibly alive to the real charms of Yeldez's person was not at first willing to send her away, but day after day hearing stories of her violence, of the revolt she was likely to produce among his women, and of the disturbance which the insolence of her conduct was continually causing, he became more reconciled to the wishes of his ladies, and requested to be informed how he could best dispose of so refractory a slave.

There was a certain renegade Jew at Ispahan, who to further his fortunes, had embraced the Mohamedan religion; a low cunning scoundrel, a knave of notoriety, celebrated as a man and woman stealer on the Georgian frontier. He began life by making false jackasses, that is, he got possession of lean beasts and filling them with

water, made ignorant purchasers believe that they were fat, and thus sold them, when a short time after they died.

This success led to the invention of more frauds, until at length his superior ingenuity was acknowledged by the great professors of roguery and he became a leading character among the fraternity of kidnappers. In that capacity, he was frequently employed by the Shah and his officers, for the purpose of procuring slaves both from Circassia and Georgia for the royal harem.

At this particular moment, he was residing at Ispahan, for the purpose of claiming certain sums from the King, in balance of slaves provided, but the charges he made were so extravagant, that he several times was in danger of seeing them settled by the executioner instead of by the treasurer.

An expedient was first suggested by the Shah himself, (happy to enjoy a practical joke,) and eagerly taken up by the eunuch in chief, for paying off the Jew, and it was as follows:—

That part of the demands upon the royal

treasury should be defrayed in kind; of which it was proposed that the person of the refractory slave, Yeldez, should form a principal item.

The Shah was extremely amused by the prospect of thus paying the rogue in his own coin; the eunuch in chief was enchanted, and so was the whole court. The proposal was then formally made, to which, if he acceded—well; but should he refuse, in due course he would be visited by payment in another shape, namely, the wrath of his Majesty, which would not fail to be exhibited in one of the many modes of punishment, common to despotic kings.

This proceeding so much alarmed the dealer in human flesh, that he began by protesting against such injustice with all the power of language. But, when he found that the proposal was truly serious, he bethought himself how he might best get out of the scrape, and demanded, as an act of common commercial justice, to see and examine the proffered commodity.

There was no difficulty in granting his re-

quest, and when, after the necessary precautions, he had surveyed Yeldez, strange to say, he no longer resisted the proposal, but forthwith acknowledged himself ready to receive her, preparatory to his departure from Ispahan.

Mehemed Chifoot as he was called, in person was entirely disgusting. Meagre and unseemly, his countenance exhibited the characteristics of cunning, duplicity and sottishness. He was so filthy, that no power could make him throw away his old garment; eternally in the same garb, he was plunged in sordid avarice, penury being remarkable in the smallest details of his existence. Having conducted Yeldez to his filthy den in the caravanserai, she there found nothing but the most abject appearance of poverty—no carpet, nothing but a mat—no cushion, nothing but the wall to lean against—she could scarcely procure a morsel to satisfy her hunger, and was obliged to sell some of her trinkets for a present livelihood.

She was made supremely happy at first in finding that she had foiled not only her ene-

mies in the royal harem, and the old fox the chief eunuch, but even the Shah himself, but when she came to look around her and found into what hands she had fallen, she bemoaned her present fate, and questioned whether dancing were not better. There was always to be sure her old consolation '*Allah kerim*,' but that she felt would not keep body and soul together.

She, therefore, determined to try what might be effected by acting upon the feelings of her new master. Taking the first opportunity of being face to face with him, she said,

"Well, and now that you have got me, what do you intend to do with me? It is plain, unless I am a dog, that Allah has not made me a bit of flesh and blood for nothing."

"My jewel!" said the dealer with a malicious leer, "it is as God wills. We are less than the least, and as poverty has been decreed to us by fate, so must we be poor. What can a wretched creature do? The Shah here is despotic, and you must say *Shukiur Allah!* praise be to Allah! that sending you to me, he sent you a living soul and not a dead carcase."

"Had I died," said Yeldez, "better perhaps had it been for me; but now that I am yours, inform me, as you are a man, what are you about to do with me?"

Mehemed Chifoot lent a deaf ear to such a question; he in truth had made up his mind, but upon that subject he was too keen a trader to allow himself to dilate. He felt that he had made one of the best of bargains. Having acquired great practice in ascertaining the money value of woman's beauty, he was sufficiently experienced to know the description of article best adapted to the taste of the different markets, wherewith he traded. It was long since his eyes had feasted upon an object so exquisite as Yeldez. There was one place in the east where he knew such charms would be invaluable, and having received a commission to procure a slave so gifted, he was overjoyed to find that he now possessed even more than that commission required.

"Allah Allah!" he would exclaim to himself, "these Persians for once in their lives, have allowed the cap to be taken from off their heads! they have given their beards into my

hand, and moreover allow me to laugh at it too I shall make my fortune by this slave—there is no sum that I may not obtain for her at Constantinople. She is fit for none else than that *khoneh kharab*, the Sultan—Mashallah! how he shall pay me! Get he but a sight of her, he will deliver up his jewelled turban, and say, 'oh my soul Mehemed Chifoot, whatever you will be pleased to demand, that much will I give!' But I sleep with my eyes open—I may be beaten in Persia; but as Allah is great, I beat in Turkey."

Thus was Yeldez once more destined to return to her old residence, the Sultan's seraglio at Constantinople. Had she but received a hint of the possibility of such a contingency, she would have sunk into the earth with apprehension; but the wary dealer was too prudent to give publicity to his intentions, and thus she luckily, for her present peace, remained ignorant of what fate was preparing for her.

Mehemed Chifoot was not long ere he quitted Ispahan accompanied by his prize; for he dreaded lest the Shah should change his mind and

reclaim her as his property. He made the best of his way into Turkey, and having sojourned some time in the neighbourhood of the Georgian frontier to complete his assortment of slaves for the Constantinople market, he at length reached Trebizond, attended (in addition to Yeldez) by a select parcel of Georgian and Circassian maidens.

Yeldez, however, still remained the principal jewel of his casket, and he did not cease making calculations upon the great profits he was about to realize in the sale of her perfections.

It is not necessary to describe—for it may be understood, that long before Mehemed Chifoot reached Trebizond—Yeldez had made his existence almost too painful to support. What with the violence of her temper, her complaints at the treatment she received at his hands, and her anxiety to know whither he was conducting her, his life became so wretched, that it was only the hope of the profits he was about to realize, which prevented him from throwing her headlong down some precipice,

or leaving her to starve in the wilderness. At length, their conversation dwindled to some few words of the following description, "Cursed imp of Satan!" was his consolatory ejaculation. "Jew without a soul!" was the result of her wrath.

At Trebizond, the whole party embarked on board a vessel bound to the great city, and after having completed their miseries by a sea-voyage, they reached the Bosphorus in safety. It was then that Yeldez was struck by the danger of her position, again beholding the spot she had so carefully avoided, and to which destiny seemed determined to restore her. The crimes she had committed, so long buried in her breast, although recorded in the annals of the seraglio, now forced themselves upon her recollection in colours so terrible, that her whole frame shook with apprehension. "Should I once again be confined within those fearful walls," she exclaimed to herself, "what will become of me? I shall find all my former enemies, fiends that they are, ready to tear me to pieces! Can time change the animosity of woman's heart? And that fatal

old devil's grandfather, the Kislar Aga, what will he say to me? I shall be thrown into the sea again, as sure as *kismet*, and no Selim at hand to help me out!" She continued to distress her mind with such like forebodings, until her cheek was white with fear. She would have killed the renegade Jew, her keeper, in order to escape, had she been able so to do, but she was too well watched, her only hope being that she might be purchased by some ancient Effendi, who would hide her in the recesses of his obscure harem, and protect her from the punishment she felt to be her due.

Mehemed Chifoot, having deposited his slaves in a place of safety, straightway dressed himself in decent attire, that is, covered his rags with a cloak, and proceeded to the imperial seraglio, there to report to the chief of the Sultan's ladies, the treasure of which he was the possessor. He was well known at the 'Sublime gate,' and although properly despised, yet a ready admittance was ever afforded to him, being a recognized agent to the pleasures of his imperial master. His arrival was an-

nounced to the Kislar Aga and he was straightway introduced into the chamber in which that dreaded chief gave audience.

Since the ejection of Yeldez from the seraglio, a considerable time had now elapsed, and changes had taken place. The Kislar Aga, who had been the cause of her punishment, was dead, and another, unacquainted with the person of Yeldez, occupied his place who had been appointed to the office through the influence of the Sultan's mother, and imported from Egypt. He was one of the finest specimens ever known of the hideous negro, having been prepared for his office by one of those simple, though cruel operations, well known in Ethiopia. His alarming ugliness, his demoniacal temper, his unflinching severity, and his great fidelity, rendered him a prize above all price to the great *Khonkhor*, who being curious in female beauty, was also ingenious in jealousy. It was before this monster that Mehemed Chifoot bent the knee and bowed the head, with trepidation, as he entered the dark room in which he was seated. Having

settled his features into the best form of adulation he could master, he first lauded the wisdom and perfections of the being scarcely human before whom he stood, and when he had relaxed a pair of wrinkles from the creature's contracted brow, and stopt the vibration of his hideous ears, he then undertook to give a description of the beautiful slave, of whom he was the owner.

The wily renegade possessed the language descriptive of woman's charms at his fingers' ends. Eyes of the antelope, teeth like pearls, cheeks of the rose, nose like Mount Ararat, waist of a cypress tree, skin like satin, rotundity of the moon, odours of musk and ambergris, all these, and a hundred such like figures, did he employ to describe the beauty of Yeldez, a creature, he asserted, who had inflamed the whole of Caucasus by her beauty. This miracle of perfection, he said, it was his good fortune to possess, and he would have deemed it sacrilege to offer her to any one, before he had presented her to the eyes of the great and intelligent Kislar Aga.

The insolent negro having listened to this speech, paused for a moment, and then announced that he would himself go and see the slave with his own eyes; but at the same time, avowed that if she did not answer the description, he would not be satisfied unless he returned with Mehemed Chifoot's ears in his pocket. To this the renegade agreed, saying, "Upon my unworthy head be it," and making the most servile prostrations and exclamations, he went his way to prepare Yeldez for the visit.

When the wretched woman was informed of the honour about being conferred upon her, and who the person was she was to see, she almost swooned away with fright. She began to cry and to bemoan herself, and after having given way to the most violent lamentations, at length avowed that she would not shew her face to the vile negro. She asserted that being a Mahomedan woman, no one of the true faith could force her to expose her face and her person, were she averse to such an exhibition.

"But," said Mehemed Chifoot, who now was at her knees to soften her temper and make her submit to his wishes, "but this is the most amiable of men and the kindest of negroes; his object is to advance your fortunes. It only remains with you to rule the empire, and to give laws to the whole state of Islam. Wherefore do you fear? Instead of being the slave of the Sultan, his mighty highness will become your slave, and the world will be at your feet. What can you wish for more?"

These assertions gave no comfort to Yeldez. She saw nothing but annihilation were she once more to become an inmate of the seraglio, and she began to consider whether it would not be wiser to state her exact position to her present master, and throw herself upon his mercy, than run the risk of the certain death which she felt assured was awaiting her. But during this interval, and before she could make up her mind what course to pursue, the Kislar Aga, slowly bending his way to the residence of the renegade Jew, reached it true to the appointed time. He was received with all due

honours, and at once introduced into the room where Yeldez, by way of distinction, was seated alone. No sooner did she cast her eyes upon him, than she perceived at a glance, he was not the man of terrors, her former enemy, and this discovery at once so quieted her mind, that from fearing, she began to hope. Matters, thought she, might be changed since her expulsion, and her apprehension might not be well-grounded. Having at first determined to resist shewing her face, she now as quickly resolved to exhibit all her charms to the best advantage, and when, at the demand of the Kislar Aga, she threw aside her veil, it was plain by the smile that played upon his horrific lips, and the flashing of his eyes, that he was satisfied the renegade's description of his slave was not overcharged.

The chief of the royal women having approved, returned overjoyed to inform his Majesty the Sultan, of the discovery he had made, and urged the necessity of instantly gaining possession of so rare a specimen of beauty.

When he had received the royal commands granting his request, he called Mehemed Chifoot

before him, and striking a bargain, agreed to pay a sum for Yeldez, so much above the usual price of Georgian slaves, that it was said so great a compliment had never been paid to womankind, since the days of a certain tyrannical slave, who, in the preceding reign, had caused the grand vizier's head to be cut off and placed at her feet. A handsome horse, magnificently caparisoned, with a band of black eunuchs, was sent to conduct her to court, and an apartment was prepared for her reception with appropriate attendants to wait upon her.

In the mean while, great had been the sensation created in the imperial harem, by the report of the speedy arrival of so extraordinary a beauty. There was not a woman within it who did not hold herself aggrieved by such an intrusion. Already a host of rivals were prepared to dispute her charms and pull her reputation to pieces. Unseen, unknown, and unheard, she was immediately reported to be hideous in person, odious in character, and stupid and unpleasant in intellect and manner. "What, could any thing good come from

so infamous a person as Mehemed Chifoot?" was said. "The Kislar Aga ought to forfeit his head for contaminating the purity of the imperial harem by bringing into it one so low and debased," was added. "She shall have no peace here," whispered those who were ambitious of royal favour. "We will dispose of her quickly," said those who actually enjoyed favour. In short, the introduction of a new beauty into the harem, seemed to be as difficult an undertaking as enforcing a new doctrine among the Ullemah.

Yeldez, in the mean while, far from enjoying the prospect of returning to her old habitation, although relieved from the fear of facing her former enemy, the late Kislar Aga, was in the utmost trepidation at what might be the result of being conducted before the Sultan in person. Much time had now elapsed since her emersion into the sea. She was supposed to be dead. Could it be possible, she thought, to pass herself off as another woman? She retained her former appellation, 'tis true, but then she reflected that Yeldez was no uncommon name; besides she was better known in

the seraglio as *Shaitan Kadun*, Satan's Lady, than as the Lady Yeldez. Her mind being full of these and such like thoughts during her ride through the streets, of a sudden they were checked by the appearance of the great gate of the seraglio, a sight which put an end to her speculations, being soon after enclosed within its walls. She kept steadily to her veil upon entering the court, where she found a collection of women awaiting her arrival, and would scarcely take it off even when she had reached her own apartment. But during her passage through that court, observations were made upon her appearance which none but women could make.

"Was not there something remarkable in her walk?" said one; "did it not put you in mind of the wicked creature who once lived among us?"

"As Allah is Allah," said another, "yes; it is the monster Yeldez, or rather the Satan's mistress, or my name is not Filfil."

"What say you?" said another. "Are your wits gone? Was not she thrown into the sea?

She was drowned in a sack. Mashallah! we got rid of her!"

"Well," said the more observant one, "if that be not Yeldez, it is her ghost. She has her very air, her manner of wearing her veil; wait, and we shall see."

Yeldez had reached her apartment, with the feelings of one condemned to death, for under the disguise of her veil, she perceived many a face well known to her, which brought to her recollection all the violent passions that former enmities had produced. She felt certain that all those enmities would again break out the moment she was recognized, and therefore was anxious to remain unnoticed, until presented to the Sultan in person, to whom she was determined to relate her whole history, should he express astonishment at seeing her.

It was not long before the Kislar Aga, paid her a visit, who condescendingly announcing that she was to appear before the Sultan, after undergoing the proper lustrations, recommended her to collect every becoming ornament, in order that she might be dressed in a manner fitted for so im-

portant an occasion. Her ingenuity in screening her face from observation, was put strongly to the test; but she managed, both in her passage to and from the bath, as well as during the operations there, to escape recognition, until, at length, all things being prepared and the hour come, she was taken to where his imperial highness awaited her presence.

So soon as she was within proper distance, she fell on her face, and there, with her forehead to the ground, waited in fear and trembling, until he should say arise. When he had uttered that word, she entirely disclosed her face to him. Struck with astonishment, he exclaimed,

"How is this? Yeldez returned! Have we jins and peris in this land, or are my eyes deceived?—This is the inevitable one!" Then turning to the Kislar Aga, he exclaimed,

"What have you brought me here? O man! know you not that this weak one was expelled from my presence? She committed crimes. Wherefore and how hath she returned? I am surprized! Allah! O Allah!" Then in deep thought, he said,

"She must be inevitable!"

As soon as the Kislar Aga heard these words, he cursed the renegade Jew in his heart, and said "Maledictions be on the dog!"

But Yeldez, who was prepared for this scene, at once acquired full possession of her senses, and adopting an attitude of the greatest humility, whilst she pitched the tone of her voice into a plaintive cadence, she said,

"Let my Lord of Lords, and the disposer of his slave's life, give ear unto her story, and as it is full of marvel and wonderment, shewing how various and great are the ways of destiny, perhaps he may pause ere he again opposes the decrees of Allah, which though exercised in the fate of one so much a reptile as your slave, are still the ways of Allah."

"Speak on," said the Sultan, "and tell me your history from the beginning."

"As I am your sacrifice," said Yeldez, "I am a maiden of the mountains of Abchaz; the earliest thing your slave can recollect, is playing about with the children of my village at selling and stealing each other, so early are the natives of the Caucasus taught to hear of slavery, and what we

played at was not long in being realized in my person. My father at an early age disposed of me to the traders on the frontier for a large price, for I was told I should be beautiful, and when with many others like myself, I at length reached Constantinople, having been kept from man's sight till it was time to put on me a permanent veil, I was bought and placed at the feet of my Lord the emperor. It was not till some time after that I became much noticed, and therefore became an object of considerable hatred. It is well known how much the late Kislar Aga hated me, and therefore it is not wonderful that I hated him. I would have drank his blood had I been able. It was said that I attempted to poison him, that I used secret enchantments, that I tried to kill myself in order to spite him, that I made a conspiracy in the harem to make him blind, to destroy him in the Sultan's favour. I did many things, and who would not, to get rid of the tyranny which he exercised over me? but most of the accusations were false. His whole life was passed in attempting to destroy me, and he would often have succeeded had it not been

for the interposition of Allah. I own too that I had a rival in the Kadun Filfil, and that I did my best to endanger her life, but she did the same in furtherance of her jealousy against me. We exerted our best endeavours to poison and murder each other. We hated with our best energies, we prayed to Allah for our mutual perdition, we never saw the sea, but we prayed that drowning might ensue, never crossed a horse but we hoped our respective necks might be broken, and thus we never ceased acting in violent opposition to each other. But as your Majesty knows, her destiny prevailed, since the order was given for my destruction. On that fatal night, when having laid a plan either to stab or poison my rival, according as circumstances might best assist me, and I was laying awake in my chamber scheming the plot, suddenly I was seized by two black eunuchs, who throwing a cloak over my head, effectually checked my cries, and then with much violence, inserted me into a sack. The day was about to dawn, when they loaded me upon the shoulders of a third, and I was hurried through the courts of

the seraglio, to that ominous small door which opens upon the sea, and which we never beheld without a shudder. I can scarcely give an account of my sensations, as I lay in the sack; but one circumstance which above others aroused all my energies, was the croaking voice of the Kislar Aga encouraging my murderers to exertion, and this being accompanied by an exulting shriek of joy from my rival, brought execrations into my throat which, from excess of agony, were suppressed before they could escape from my lips. I became a living mass of every evil passion, I would have ordered a feast to be made upon every soul within the walls of the seraglio, and witnessed with joy their tortures over slow fires; I could with savage delight have seen a demon's throat ready to receive them.

"I gnashed my teeth, I writhed about in my confinement; I became a Satan myself. But soon were all my miseries at an end, for with a fearful concussion I was thrown into the sea, and there I cast myself about—for the sack was large—and I thus momentarily kept myself above water.

"I was sinking, and should straightway have found the bottom, had not I suddenly felt my progress stopped, and being drawn by force along the surface of the water, I was at length pulled into a boat, where I lay utterly insensible.

"As I am your sacrifice," said Yeldez, "what was this but the hand of destiny? who ever heard before of a woman being saved under similar circumstances? Had not the boat been there on the spot, I must have been destroyed, and had not a compassionate soul been within, what hope was there for me? Besides, had this act of cruelty not been performed precisely at the hour it was, when the dusk screened the boat from observation, I must have been lost, for who could have ventured to save me in open day? Such then is the history of your slave, in mercy, pity and forgive her. Let her not again incur the displeasure of the asylum of the world, and may he recollect that as Allah has been merciful, so let him not reject her humble supplications, and drive her from the skirt of his robe, which now she seeks."

The Sultan having listened with patience, until she had ceased speaking, carried his hand to his beard, and stroking it exclaimed,

"Allah! Allah!" then pondering awhile he inquired, "who was the man who saved you?"

"As your slave is less than the least," said Yeldez, "he is a poor youth, a waterman of the name of Selim, whose mother, a negress, lives at Scutari."

"What became of you?" said his Majesty, "after you had been saved from the sea, and how did you again return here?"

"May the asylum of the world live for ever," said Yeldez, "the story is a long one—such marvels has she to relate, that whoever hears them will say the weak one lies; but as Allah is my witness, she speaks the truth, or how else could she ever have got hither, where danger and death awaited her, had she not been impelled by fate?"

"Speak on," said the Sultan, more than ever interested in her history, "speak on, and lie not."

Yeldez then continued her story, which is already too well known to be repeated, but suppressing such parts of it, as did not suit her convenience, and dilating upon such incidents as were likely to obtain favour in the eyes of her present master, she succeeded in exciting his surprize and curiosity in a manner quite new to the dull routine of a sovereign's life.

She thought it right to dwell much upon the virtues and excellence of Selim, for she felt that as he might perhaps be forthcoming, she ought, ere now, to lay herself out for securing his good offices. The history of her adventures at Angora, of her travels by the caravan, of her escape at Bagdad, and of her subsequent arrival at the capital of Persia, she described with ingenuity, and so coloured her adventures, as to raise her character in the Sultan's estimation. She concluded her narrative by a lamentation, deploring her ill fate at falling into the hands of one so base as Mehemed Chifoot, for whom, in so doing, she fervently hoped to have secured a suitable bastinado.

The Sultan dismissed her with an injunction to keep quiet, and so to regulate her conduct in the seraglio as to live in peace with her companions; he then turned upon the Kislar Aga who was in attendance, and poured upon him the vials of his wrath.

"Dog without a similitude!" he exclaimed, "wherefore do you go prowling about amidst the filth of humankind, and bring into our presence polluted abominations by way of specimens of undefiled purity? Must you fish up, from the depths of the sea, what we ourselves have thrown there, and pride your intellect upon having found youth, beauty, and innocence, such as were never before seen, and bring them to our presence, when you have, in fact, discovered what we have discarded as filth and corruption? Here, blacks, and here, whites," calling to the executors of his vengeance, "here, strike this no man, and let him learn what it is to live with his eyes shut, when he ought to keep them day and night open for our service."

Having received a sufficient number of stripes, the wretched eunuch limped away,

foaming with rage, and without resting on his road, made at once for the dwelling of the renegade Mehemed Chifoot. Accompanied by a band of his myrmidons, he entered therein, and, without a word of explanation, forthwith seized him, and before he could recover from his astonishment, or learn the cause of this intrusion, he was visited by as severe a punishment as ever was inflicted upon a Jew.

"Dog of a Chifoot," said the Kislar Aga to the afflicted wretch, as he lay writhing on the floor, "you will sell me an old abomination for a piece of spotless innocence, will you? You will not do so another time, by the prophet."

"Pity, oh pity!" cried the renegade; "as I live, and by your head, I brought her from Ispahan! What evil have I done? Wherefore strike without saying why?"

"You will impose an imp of Satan upon me, when I am looking out for a sainted Houri, will you?" continued the enraged superintendant of the women, urging his men to strike with more violence. "The Emperor is not to have his beard laughed at after this manner! The refuse and sweepings of harems, you pass

off for something new; but look at these eyes of mine, they are no longer to be deceived. Mashallah! we are something in the world!"

By this time, the wretched renegade had been beaten into a mass of insensibility, where he was left to die or to recover, as destiny might ordain, and the Kislar Aga, having by this act assuaged his rage, and calmed his temper, walked away sufficiently well pleased.

Yeldez, having retired from the presence of the Sultan, returned to the solitude of her apartment, much disconcerted by the result of her interview. She felt consoled, however, that she had not been slain on the spot, and, moreover, that no order was given for a second immersion into the ocean; but she well knew the danger of her position, surrounded as she was by her former enemies, and felt that no scheme would be left untried ere they got rid of her a second time. In vain did she determine to command her temper and controul her tongue. She already felt rising within her breast, all the sensations of her former hates, and could not repress the train of thought suggested by the ebullitions of passion. Her

rival, Fiiri, was still here. Many of those who had formerly taken part against her, she could perceive from her windows, and although she refrained mixing in their society as long as she was able, still she felt that the meeting must take place, and some attended with taunts, accents of derision, and indications of contempt.

She was sitting alone, ruminating upon her dangerous position, when she was aroused by hearing the voice of the Kaiar Aga, who just returned, self-satisfied and triumphant at his victory over the renegade Jew, entered her apartment, and addressed her in the following terms, with the accent of a master,

"Now, open well your eyes, O, you weak one," said he; "the Sultan of Sultans has spared your life this once, for it is plain, fate has ordained that you should not die by the hand of man; but beware! Should you open your lips to speak a crooked word, or use your eyes to cast a crooked look, or make one step to the left when you ought to step to the right, you are undone. Your destinies are closed, and you may exclaim, *Allah himayet*,

protection from Allah, for none will you receive from man.

"Has anything befallen Mehemed Chifoot?" inquired Yeldez, with earnest anxiety.

"Make your mind easy," said the Kislar Aga; "his soul has been made to steal out of his body."

"Praise the Prophet!" said Yeldez.

"*Ameen!*" said the Kislar Aga, both expressing their unbounded satisfaction at this event, when Yeldez was left to herself, and soon after began to receive the visits of the inmates of the seraglio.

The first lady who appeared was Filfil herself, accompanied by certain of her friends. With an ironical smile, Filfil approached Yeldez, and putting on the appearance of friendship, kissed her cheek and said,

"Your place has long been empty. *Khosh geldin*, you are welcome!"

Yeldez, not unobservant of the smile, and full of sensitiveness as to the nature of her first salutation, returned the compliment in the best manner she was able, and afterwards kept silence.

"Mashallah!" said Filfil; "you are the first among us who has ever made a journey and returned safe. Your steps have been fortunate."

"Yes, and by sea too," said a cunning one, inclined for war.

"Yes, and perhaps the Khanum will tell us what lives the fishes lead," said a third, still more ironical, with a smile of impertinence, that would have made a Mufti angry.

This question produced a universal titter among the gay visitors, whilst it brought the blood into Yeldez's face, and announced a preparation for hostilities.

"It seems that my absence has as little improved your manners as it has your looks," said Yeldez. "It is a poor destiny that brings me back to such friends."

"The sea has wetted the Khanum's wit, as well as her fair skin," said Filfil, laughing, and staring at her well in the face.

"The next thing she will do," said the second, "will be to teach us how the fishes can swim. Mashallah! what will not travellers say!"

"She must come to us though," said the third, "to learn how to acquire the Sultan's good graces. We know things! Mashallah!" she exclaimed, whilst all the others laughed outright; "we know things, although we have not been to Bagdad!"

"Speak on, speak on!" exclaimed Yeldez, her face assuming a more crimson hue, her eyes beginning to flash, and her breath to heave short. "Speak on; whatever you may know, this I know, that it does not require to travel as far as Bagdad to discover that the Filfil Kadun has not improved in the affections of the heart; and as for those who follow her and lick up the dust of her slippers, they have learnt the arts of speech from the barking of curs in the streets."

"Whatever our affections may be," said Filfil, with a toss of the head, "they are and have been confined to the walls of the seraglio. Had we taken the surface of the world, and the whole of mankind as the ground-work of our affection, as some one we know has done, perhaps we should not have been so exclusive. As for our followers, they have tongues and

wits of their own, with which we have nothing to do; but this we know, that we will repel insolence, and will not think the better of the Kadun Yeldez because she has been fished up from the bottom of the sea when she ought to have been drowned, nor esteem her the more because she has travelled from one end of Asia to the other, like an unveiled and shameless Yûrûk."*

By this time, anger had ripened in the breast of Yeldez, and the consequent explosion became inevitable. She swelled in every artery, she clenched her hands, and sat uneasy in her place; she gave place to those crooked looks, without restraint, which she had been enjoined to eschew; and, at length, the cauldron of her wrath boiling over, it freely overflowed through the medium of her tongue. Such a torrent of violent words had never before been heard to proceed from one little mouth. Her long travels and various adventures furnished her with new epithets. So various were her allu-

* So the wandering tribes are called in Turkey—their women go unveiled.

sions, so singular her powers of malediction, so generalizing her modes of application, that no ingenuity of speech could exceed the powers which she exhibited. Filfil and her followers became mute with astonishment, and the whole of the seraglio having collected to hear the rhapsody, it was fully ascertained that the Kadun Yeldez had not lost the privilege of being called the devil's lady, and the dismay was complete.

The Kislar Aga having witnessed the altercation, in vain endeavoured to allay it; as a last resource, he made the case known to his imperial master, and entreated his orders. The Sultan was not taken unprepared, for fully was he aware of the violence of his slaves, and particularly of Yeldez; but, good Mussulman as he was, his mind was so seriously impressed by the story she had related, whereby he felt that the decrees of destiny were opposed to his commands, that he paused ere he ventured to reiterate those commands.

"She must not die by my hand," thought his highness, "Allah in his wisdom hath determined that; but she must not stay where

she is. If the Kislar Aga cannot maintain his authority without the necessity of drowning, the harem of the empire cannot exist."

He then turned over in his mind how he could best dispose of this extraordinary and inevitable being, and, at length, a thought struck him, which being acted upon, may illustrate how unexpectedly and by what an unforeseen chain of circumstances, the fortunes of individuals are made to depend. The Sultan's attention had been much impelled by Yeldez's narrative, to consider the case and merits of Selim, her deliverer. His first impulse upon hearing of his interference in arresting the punishment which he had ordered, was to determine upon condemning him to undergo the fate of her whom he had saved; but being a firm predestinarian, he became awed by the reflection that Selim was, in truth, a finger of the hand of providence, and that instead of plotting his destruction, he ought, on the contrary, to compass his exaltation. Having ascertained that he was still at Angora, in the service of the Pacha there, he resolved to raise him to

the first post of importance which should fall vacant, foreseeing that the conduct which he had displayed in minor matters, would secure his integrity in greater.

It so happened that, at this very juncture, the Bostanji Bashi, the comptroller of the gardens, nominally so called, but, in fact, the great police officer of the Bosphorus and its shores, died. The Sultan at once decided in his mind that Selim should succeed him, and accordingly the proper firman having been written, and the pelisse of honour selected, a Capiji Bashi was ordered, forthwith, to proceed to Angora with the commission of investing Selim with the office.

It is now time to turn to that part of our story which relates to Angora, its Pasha, and his harem. Having been relieved from the intrusion of Yeldez, that worthy family had relapsed into its wonted state of repose. The only innovation in their usual habits, produced by that circumstance, was this, that when the name of Yeldez was mentioned, the Pasha would shake his head, stroke his beard, and say:

"*Chok chey!* much! much!"

Whilst his wife would exclaim, as she threw her five fingers into the air:

"*Allah bellah versin!* May heaven send her misfortunes!"

Selim was the one principally benefited, for his conduct had been so praiseworthy, and he had so effectually secured the confidence of his master, that he was raised in public estimation, and thereby became, perhaps, the most influential person in the city. Instead of being offensively elated by his good fortune, the modest youth persevered in maintaining the even tenor of his way, obedient and attentive to his superiors, disinterested, though ready to do a good turn to those who, in justice, sought his interference. One favour, alone, he had required at the hands of the Pasha, which was, permission to withdraw his beloved mother from her cottage at Scutari, in order to lodge her in a more becoming house at Angora; which, having been granted, he felt that his happiness was complete; his ambition soaring no higher, than to sit in peace, he and his mother, under the shade of the Pasha's protection.

Matters were in this state, when the howlings of the surijies,* announcing a great cavalcade were heard at a distance, and a tatar† was seen riding on in advance, at the utmost speed of his horse, in order to announce to the Pasha the approaching arrival of his excellency the Capiji Bashi; and to the surprise of all, particularly, to the utter confusion of Selim, asserting that he, Selim, was indebted to him, the *mujdehlook*, or, in other words, the price of good news.

A Capiji Bashi, and a pelisse, he said, were on the road for him; more he would not say.

The astounded youth, and the wonder-stricken Pasha looked at each other in mutual astonishment, not rightly knowing how to meet a piece of intelligence so unexpected; but, in consideration of the commands of the Sultan, they touched their turbans with their hands, and said:

"Upon our heads be it!"

As the messenger had predicted, so did it happen. The great man, the Capiji Bashi, arrived, was lifted off his horse in great state

* Conductors and guides of travellers. † A courier.

at the gate of the Pasha's palace, was duly conducted up stairs, seated on the sofa, smoked his pipe, drank his coffee, and then, unfolding the firman from within the folds of a handkerchief, and exhibiting the pelisse from within the folds of a silken enclosure, he forthwith read the one aloud, and taking up the other, threw it over the shoulders of Selim, who, more dead than alive, heard himself called:

"The Great and Imperial Bostanji Bashi!"

"Selim the Bostanji Bashi! how can that be?" exclaimed every one who heard the announcement. "It is but the other day that he was a waterman at Scutari, and a very short time since that he appeared in the shape of a pauper and a slave in this our city of Angora! Well done, destiny! Oh, powerful kismet!" said the pious Mussulmans. "We have seen fate perform great feats, but never such as this. Allah best ordains; but if the slave, Selim, becomes Bostanji Bashi, who knows but the Pasha may become Grand Vizier?"

So soon as it was known that Yeldez, by another stroke of destiny, had returned to the imperial harem, and was once again become a

Sultana, there was no end to the speculations and the surmises of the men, nor to the gossip among the women. The whole city became interested in the event; and though Turks are with difficulty aroused into energy, in this instance they did not fail to do credit to the curiosity inherent in our nature.

Selim, who ought to have been the most elated was the one who spoke the least. He went through all the prescribed forms, on the reception of a firman, and exhibited the proper humility and devotedness upon being invested with the pelisse of honour, but, in his heart, he doubted the truth of his elevation, conceiving it to be a mistake. However, he kept his own counsel until after a conversation with the Sultan's officer, in person, when he became convinced, that in reality, he was the person designated. He then became excessively grave, and asked himself whether he was to consider such an event as downright good fortune, or whether it might not, perhaps, be preparatory to some great calamity.

The Pasha, himself, good Turk, and best of predestinarians, was not in the least disturbed

by envy at this event; but regarded it as much a matter of course, that a slave and pipe-bearer should become at once a great magistrate, and a superintendant of police, as that the sun was sometimes above and sometimes below the horizon. Philosophy and *kismet* did not enjoy quite so undisturbed a reign in the heart of the Pasha's wife. That excellent lady, who, since the departure of Yeldez, had allowed no occurrence to disturb the phlegmatic composure of her existence, now, however, could not control a murmur, that if promotion was due to any one, it was due to her husband, so long the ruler of Angora, and who, she asserted, was fully entitled to the confidence of his imperial master; particularly when she recollected, that under the present arrangement, the negress, Rosebud, might claim an equal rank with herself.

Far other feelings existed in the breast of that same negress, for she was, indeed, peculiarly gifted with generosity and kindness of heart, black though she were. When she first heard of the great exaltation of her son, she did not deem such an event extraordinary,

seeing that she esteemed his merits to be quite deserving of such recompense. She was not long in seeking his embrace; at the same time, she brought to his recollection those days when they were glad to gain a scanty subsistence by the toil of his hands, on that very Bosphorus where now he was destined to reign almost supreme. She intreated him never to lose sight of that fact, and whenever he might be tempted to indulge in pride, to go, straightway, and seat himself on the very stone on which he had reposed, when contemplating the necessity of selling his boat, to fulfil the duties of hospitality.

We must refer to the imagination of the reader, the many circumstances attending the departure of Selim from Angora, to take possession of his important appointment; the expressions of his gratitude, and his leave-taking of his kind master the Pasha; the care which he took of his mother; her humility as well as joy, upon finding herself under the safe-guard of a son so elevated and dignified, and all the various incidents attending his ar-

rival, at a house prepared for his reception on the banks of the Bosphorus, and so take him, at once, to Constantinople.

Having been received with marked attention by the Sultan, and being duly furnished with the necessary instructions relating to the duties of his office, he entered upon them with zeal and alacrity; but, however, much he might feel elated, and almost stupified, by this singular change in his position in life, still he never could divest himself of the idea, that there was still some mystery lurking behind the curtain of his destiny, which, sooner or later, would step forth, and make him feel that there was no human happiness without alloy. And, indeed, so it proved.

The very day after he was installed, and had taken possession of his house; when he, and his mother were in full admiration of his domain, his gardens, his fountains, and had been clapping their hands over the magnificence of the barge, which, in his official situation, was appointed to convey him, he was astonished by the visit of one of the Imperial eunuchs.

Selim visited by an eunuch was a circum-

stance of itself sufficiently startling to alarm him. He had often heard of the disasters which attended their visits, for their business could not fail to be connected with that dangerous commodity, woman, and he still was too much impressed with the recollection of that fatal morning when he had seen two of them throw the wretched Yeldez into the sea, not to be oppressed with fear, now that he heard a visit from one of the name announced. He composed himself into respect as soon as the individual in question appeared, for he feared lest his, Selim's, interference in thwarting the royal decrees by saving one of its victims from a watery grave, should, at length, have been discovered and brought up against him. To his surprize, however, the eunuch made him an obeisance, such only as an inferior makes to his superior, and after a preamble, announced that his Majesty, the Sultan, out of regard to his merits, and from the pure effects of his imperial condescension, had conferred upon him the gift of one female slave, from his own sublime seraglio.

Selim, hitherto unmarried, unappropriated

and indifferent to a change, blushed with apprehension at the gift. He did not, however, forget to make the proper inclination of the body when the name of his sovereign was mentioned, and touching his turban, said,

"Upon my head be it!" whilst he appeared joyful and overflowing with gratitude at this sudden mark of the monarch's condescension. So soon as the eunuch was gone, he immediately sought his mother, and before she could have time to make him welcome, he exclaimed,

"As you live, mother, have you seen?—have you been informed?"

"What?" said Rosebud; "what has happened?"

"My wit has become small, and my head contracted. Tell me, O mother, is my soul to be happy, or am I to begin eating abomination?"

"Are you become mad, Selim?" said the tender-hearted negress. "My comprehension reaches not to your words. What has happened?—Speak!"

"What has happened!" said Selim; "this

much has happened—I am to possess a slave—a royal slave. Either my fate is becoming more and more desirous of making my head touch the skies, or I am being raised on high in order to sink the deeper. The Sultan has sent me one of his weak ones, from his own harem."

"Is that all?" said Rosebud, her heart relieved from apprehension. "Are women so much to be feared? 'Tis true all our misfortunes came from a woman, who was thrown into our hands by destiny; but as Allah is great, all women are not Yeldez. Besides, any gift from a royal hand brings good luck; therefore, O my son, let us say, praise be to Allah, and await the consequences with resignation. I will go prepare for her reception. She must be treated as a Sultana; my only fear is, that I, poor ignorant one, shall not know how to behave myself."

At the close of that same day, the eunuch returned accompanying a lady, closely veiled from head to foot, who was mounted upon a horse finely caparisoned, and waited upon by a black woman slave, also closely veiled. He

caused her to alight, which she did, shewing some appearance of disinclination, for she was not disposed to follow his commands. She was then conducted straight to the women's apartments, to which she ascended with a toss of the head and a disdainful vibration of body—actions which seemed to express, I am doing the owner of this house an honour by my presence.

Rosebud, having watched her progress upwards, fled her presence to seek Selim, who she intended should bear the brunt of the first presentation. Selim too, who was shy by nature, though firm of purpose, was slow in making his approaches, and did not present himself until he had been invited thereto by the eunuch, who, having fulfilled the orders of his royal master, uttered his *mobarek olla*, or fortune attend you, with the utmost obsequiousness, in expectation of the usual present, of which he was not disappointed. Selim then proceeded, followed by his mother. The lady, still veiled, was seated with her back to the door through which they entered. She continued in this position apparently intentionally with dogged obstinacy, whilst the black

slave stood at a distance. At length, as they approached, she suddenly turned upon them, and to their surprize, uttered a shriek, in a voice which they recognized as one not new to them. They contemplated each other for some seconds, when the stranger, throwing off her veil, disclosed the never-to-be forgotten form and features of Yeldez. The exclamations of Allah, Allah! and *ajaib!* and *akh!* and *chokchey!* and the thousand accents of wonderment and ejaculation consequent upon an unexpected and strange discovery, having gradually evaporated, explanations ensued, which excited the undivided attention of both the parties. Selim did not cease wondering how Yeldez could have got there, whilst Yeldez remained utterly astounded at finding Selim in such a position.

Their mutual explanations did not increase their love for each other. Selim's recollection of her former conduct, made him shudder at the very thought of possessing such a fiend within his doors, whilst she, who, notwithstanding all her former misfortunes, still allowed her brain to be inflated with the vapours that we are

apt to obtain in a court, continued to despise and look down upon Selim, the preserver of her life and the self-devoted to her interests. However, when she began to consider that, perhaps, in truth, it were better to be supreme in the house of the Bostanji Bashi, than the despised and the degraded in the imperial seraglio, she gradually contemplated her position with a more benignant aspect, and concluded by determining that she would do Selim the honour to make him the partaker of her gracious condescension. But to describe the airs of superiority, the accents of command, the insubordination, with which she set about installing herself in his harem, would be difficult; it is sufficient to say, that the house of harmony and repose which she had found, she soon turned into a den of discord and dissension. To the kind and tender-hearted Rosebud, Yeldez behaved like an untamed tigress. She treated her as if her soul was made of mud; she would allow her no rest; she almost denied her being the mother of her own son, and asserted that negresses were only fit to be the foot-stools of white women. Her extra-

vagancies of conduct were unceasing; there was no end to the scenes of contention to which she gave rise, and it required more than the forbearance of Selim, or the devoted humility of Rosebud, to persevere in submitting to her excesses.

The Bostanji Bashi's house was situated in full view of the seraglio point of the imperial palace, and consequently of the very spot where Selim had rescued Yeldez from her watery grave.

"There," said Rosebud, as she one day replied with vivacity to the taunting speeches of the ruthless woman—"there—do you not see that spot? does it not bring to your recollection all that you owe my son, when he saved you from death and the sea? Wherefore then will you continue to tempt Allah, and behave in the ungrateful manner you do?"

"What words are these?" said Yeldez. "Save me from drowning, indeed? There is that for his saving," she said, throwing her fingers into Rosebud's face. "If he had not saved me, would he be here, a greater man than he ever could have dreamt to be?—tell me that—no more of his saving me. I am a

royal woman, and he a vile black and white man, with wool on his head. Am I to endure such a fate? No, he shall never hear the last of his impertinence in presuming to own me as his slave. Slave indeed! I am either his wife, or I am nothing. And if his wife, I am as good as he is. Go to, you black mother of a black and white son. Speak no more, or you will see what Yeldez can do, who has bearded Kings and Sultans to their faces, much less a miserable tugger at the oar, like Selim!"

This is but a feeble specimen of the misery which Selim endured at the hands of this impracticable woman; and, at length, to such a pitch did she carry her insolence, that he seriously considered first whether he might not be the means of fulfilling that destiny to which she had been originally intended, but which he had averted, or secondly, whether he should prefer a petition to his imperial master, the Sultan, setting forth his griefs, and begging that he might be released from the cause of them. He preferred the latter alternative, and consequently having made friends with

the Kislar Aga, he delivered to him a petition, to be presented upon the first fitting opportunity.

Having stated his entire devotion to the commands of his Majesty, and avowing his readiness to lay down his life in his service, if necessary, he said, "If it be the wish of your Majesty that your slave should live the life of the wretched, he is ready so to do, but should it be the imperial pleasure to ordain his well-being, then let him be released from what is worse than death—a vicious woman. Perhaps your Majesty, in the fullness of his benevolence, intended to confer a benefit on his unworthy slave, but be it known that if this be a benefit, death would be more welcome."

More he said, but concluded in language so full of humility and devotedness, that the Sultan, on reading it, could only smile at the simplicity of his Bostanji Bashi, whilst he applauded the success which had attended his own scheme, for, in truth, he had got rid of the one great torment that embittered the well-being of his harem.

"Mashallah!" he would say; "that excellent Bostanji Bashi, what abomination he does devour!"

There was, however, still one plague more in the harem which required expulsion, and that was Filfil, the bitter enemy, and long established rival of the wretch Yeldez. Upon the principle of curing one malady by infusing another, the Sultan proceeded to grant Selim's petition by a novel mode of concession, but which he conceived would be the means of effectually curing the evil he complained of; he determined to present Filfil to him, as a second donation; it was impossible, he thought, that two wild beasts could exist in one den; the experiment was worth the trial, and although it might be at the cost of his officer's convenience, yet he was young and could bear it; besides he might thus afford to pay for the great benefit of his sudden elevation.

Selim was impatiently waiting the result of his application, when, to his breathless surprise, the royal eunuch again appeared, and announced that his imperial Majesty, in consideration of his great favour, and approval of

his good conduct, had been pleased to confer upon him the gift of a second slave, and had sent him one of the flowers of the harem, the famous Filfil.

"God is great!" exclaimed Selim; "what is to be done? Allah, Allah! a second slave—a second torment—where can I hide my head? Where can I thrust my ears, not to hear? how can I confine my hands, that I may not strike?"

He then ran and consulted with his mother.

"Has the Sultan sent a second slave!" exclaimed the negress, perfectly breathless with surprize. "There must be something in this; perhaps we are destined to be the jailors of all refractory slaves. Yeldez must have been as violent in the seraglio as she is here—a devil is a devil, be it in paradise or in its own territory; probably this second one may also be a fiend; we shall see. If she be, 'tis plain two such cannot live in one house. Let us put our trust in Allah, and obey our sovereign lord, the Sultan."

Thus spoke this very sagacious negress; her words were so consolatory to her son, that he immediately received his new gift, accompanied

by all the necessary speeches indicative of his devotion to the imperial commands, and straightway ushered Filfil into the women's apartments.

Followed by his mother, who conducted Filfil, he lead the way to where Yeldez was seated, in all the insolence of despotism. As soon as they appeared, in accents of no encouraging nature, the violent woman loudly inveighed against Selim's insolence, in daring to enter her apartment, and approach her person, without first giving her timely and respectful notice.

"Son of a black woman! thou child of wool!" she said, "wherefore come you thus? Go, go; I abhor and despise everything that belongs to you!"

As soon as she perceived Rosebud in his train, her insolence became still greater.

"Mother of blacks, begone!" she exclaimed.

But what was her astonishment to perceive a third, and what her still greater astonishment to recognize Filfil— Filfil, the one abhorred object of her soul, in that third.

She started up, and standing upon her feet, she exclaimed:

"You here? you, you base and ill-fated wretch! Wherefore do you come? come you to insult me? As I live, you shall not long exist in the same place with me!"

Filfil, adopting the same cool impertinence with which she had accosted her rival in the seraglio, addressed her as follows,

"I am as much mistress here as you are. Mighty fine airs, indeed! One might suppose that there was but one living beast in the world, and that beast was the charming person who now stands before me!"

Who that has ever seen two indignant dogs, with ruffled crests, preparing for a fight; or, perchance, the wild cat, angry at the approach of a stranger, may, perhaps, have some idea of the aspect of these two viragoes, as they eyed each other, excited by mutual taunts and vituperation, to acts of open violence. Having placed them in presence of each other, Selim and his mother retired from the room, and leaving them together, kept watch at some distance, to witness what might be the result of so strange an interview.

It was not long before they heard sounds,

which proved that the actual onset had begun. There was much scuffling, words of malediction, blows, cries, groans, chasing, and tearing about; then a silence followed, with hard breathing, frenzied exclamations, and apparent exhaustion. At this stage of the proceeding, Selim, followed by his mother, ventured to look within the door, where the vigorous Yeldez was seen standing over her antagonist, who, prostrate, with hair dishevelled and eyes closed, had been much belaboured. Yeldez could not speak for rage. She was in truth neither more nor less than the personification of a fury, of a ghoul in frenzy, of an evil spirit beside itself. Every species of malediction and blasphemy was pouring forth, in one unceasing stream, from her livid and foaming lips; whilst death and murder seemed to be flashing from her bloodshot eyes.

Selim, at this sight, could not refrain from interference, and his wary mother scarcely prevented him, for she foresaw that such violence could only end in a crisis beneficial to their future peace. He instantly threw himself upon Yeldez, and exerting his best

strength, dragged her from her victim, and loosing his sash from around his waist, instantly bound her hand and foot, although, in so doing, he felt that he was perhaps contending with something more than flesh and blood, some incarnate evil spirit. Having so pinioned her, he threw her into a corner, and then assisted the fallen Filfil to rise. When she was restored to her senses, he gave them both over to the care of their respective attendants, and then quitted the harem, determined never more to set his foot within its walls until peace should visit it.

He retired, utterly confounded and afflicted at what he had seen, and thoughts and words issued from his mouth, something to the following purpose:

"And so I have been erected into a man of power, in order that the blood which must flow, sooner or later, from these unfortunate wretches, should be laid at my door. I always thought something more was to proceed from this my singular elevation, than meets the eye. The Sultan, our Emperor, has been frightened by the act of destiny, of which I was the minister, to throw the blood of this miserable woman

upon my shoulders, rather than take it upon his own. So be it. Allah is great! but Selim will hold fast to that which is good, and pray for strength to pursue the right path."

He, in truth, did not approach the harem, or its inmates, for some time, following the duties of his office with zeal and alacrity; allowing his mother to superintend his household, and, in her wisdom, to make what arrangements she might deem fitting for its better regulation.

Some weeks had now elapsed, and Selim, hearing nothing of his hopeful ladies, began to flatter himself that quiet and moderation had taken the place of the violence of which he had been the witness, when his mother, one morning, came to him, with a face expressive of great interest and agitation.

"It is as I expected," said she; "the deed is done!"

"What has happened?" said Selim.

"Those unfortunate women!" said Rosebud. "One of them, Filfil, is now lying dead in her bed, poisoned! and the other, that worse than demon, Yeldez, is not to be found. She is

gone — her women suppose that in a fit of madness, she has thrown herself into the sea, or that she has been taken home by some evil spirit, superior to herself in power. But, as Allah is Allah, true it is that both are gone; and thanks be to the prophet, that you, my son, have had no hand in their death. Now you may reap the fruit of your forbearance, and, for the future, lead a quiet life. Take to yourself a real wife. Seek one of low pretensions, of humble mind, of docile heart; and, particularly, seek one who loves Allah, and places his commandments ever before her eyes."

Selim, whatever were his feelings on this occasion, was greatly relieved by this sudden destruction of that which so much impeded his enjoyment of life. He began now to breathe freely. The weight which oppressed him was removed. He became a new man. He was entirely devoted to his duties. He was the pattern of a public servant. He more than ever increased in favour with his lord and master. In time, his mother procured for him

the wife that was suited to his faithful, affectionate, and virtuous character, and he lived as happy as a Turk can be supposed to live.

When the Mirza had concluded his narration, I exclaimed:

"*Ajaib!* oh, wonderful! Surely, such adventures could only happen in a Mahomedan country! That universal masquerade in which your women walk, is the cause of much of the cruelty, injustice, and insecurity to which they are exposed. Withdraw their veil, and, at once, they take that place in God's creation which was intended for them."

"Allah forbid!" exclaimed my Persian friend. "Who can say what such a proceeding, without due preparation, might produce throughout the country? Were a royal firman issued suddenly to give freedom to woman's eyes, that permission would bring on the uncontrolled freedom of their tongues, and then

Allah preserve us! It is impossible to say what would happen!"

"Give ear to my words," said I. "If you wish Persia to be counted among civilized nations, you must treat your women as responsible beings. At present, they are not so; for the husband, by shutting up and veiling his wife, takes charge of her actions. Good government is based upon the principle of individual responsibility, which is, indeed, the foundation of true religion. No man can work out another's salvation. No husband, by putting a veil over his wife's face, or shutting her up in a separate place, can, by so doing, control the feelings of her heart, or ensure her endeavours to be virtuous."

My friend, who was ever inclined to adopt the most liberal views relating to government and the liberty of the subject, strange to say, was slow in admitting the necessity of the total emancipation of women from the restraint under which they live in Mahomedan countries. The history of Yeldez, he affirmed, proved, more than ever, the necessity of that

restraint, whilst I maintained the contrary. Although, on a former occasion, he had advocated reform, yet his contrary sentiments now, only proved that the strongest prejudices which a Mahomedan would have to overcome, ere he gave the blessings of liberty to his country, would be those relating to womankind.

We parted, as is often the case, little convinced by argument, where prejudice exists. I promised to give him the history of some of our most eminent women, in order to prove to him how worthy they are of being advanced to an almost equality of privileges with man; and he assured me he should be delighted in possessing such facts, were it only to found a story upon them.

I then left him, reiterating my thanks for the benefit he had conferred upon me by his communications, and hoping that he would allow me to continue to enjoy the inventions of his prolific brain.

And here I draw my labours to a close. Whether any further accounts of my visits to my Persian friend will be agreeable to the

public, or whether, according to the custom of the modern stage, I shall be called upon to re-appear, and make my bow, time and my publisher will show. Perhaps, in the mean while, I may venture to assert, that the East, as we have known it in Oriental Tales, is now fast on the change. "*C'est le commencement de la fin.*" Perhaps we have gleaned the last of the beards, and obtained an expiring glimpse of the heavy caoûk, and the ample shalwar, ere they are exchanged for the hat, and the spruce pantaloon.

How wonderful is it—how full of serious contemplation is the fact, that the whole fabric of Mahomedanism should have been assailed, almost suddenly, as well as simultaneously, by events which nothing human could have foreseen. Barbary, Egypt, Syria, the banks of the Euphrates and Tygris, the Red Sea, Constantinople, Asia Minor, Persia and Affghanistan, all, more or less, have felt the influence of European, or Anti-Mahomedan agencies.

Perhaps the present generations may not see a new structure erected, but, true it is, they have seen its foundation laid. Such like

considerations teach us this great lesson, that in what pertains to kingdoms, states, and nations, as in the case of individual man, nothing is stationary—all is in a state of progression—and thus on till

THE END.

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